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THE
EAST INDIA
SKETCH-BOOK.

BY A LADY.

The poor exile
Feels, in each action of the varied day,
His doom of banishment. The very air
Cools not his brow as in his native land,
The scene is strange, the food is loathly to him,
The language, nay, the music jars his ears.

WALTER SCOTT

SECOND SERIES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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INTERCEPTED LETTERS.

No. 1.

FROM ENGLAND TO INDIA.

MY DEAR FRANK,

BY this time we are all enjoying the certainty of your being safely landed in India. The period we calculated you would pass on the voyage, has been spent by us in a very uncomfortable manner, we have been so full of anxiety about you ! The wind never blew what sailors call *fresh*, without our being distressed by a thousand apprehensions on your account. It was in vain that we called reason

to our aid, and endeavoured to console ourselves by remembering that in the very distant latitude which probably might be marked on that day in the log-book of your ship, *you* might be gasping beneath the oppressiveness of a calm in the torrid zone. Poor mamma, who, you know, never can be convinced of any thing beyond the limits of her own experience, worked herself into an absolute fever on one occasion, when what *we* called a hurricane, blew off some of the-roof of the house, and uprooted half-a-dozen trees in the ground. In vain we proved to her by a calculation on the most approved principles, that you must at that time absolutely be crossing the line. Proof, as you are aware, with her never avails against prepossession, and her terrors lasted until the wind abated, the dilapidations were repaired, and the ruined trees removed. She forgot her terrors sooner than I did ; for on

many a fine serene evening here, I have trembled at the different weather you might be experiencing, and have probably had but a restless pillow, when she has dreamt that you were wafted to your destination by every gale that is most propitious.

Well, and how did you like your voyage? I hope a very long letter is now on its way to us, detailing most minutely all the delights and all the disagreeables of your sea adventures. How often have I wished myself your companion, witnessing, in all the might of its grandeur, the terrors of that sublime ocean which you have tracked. Why is it that the existence of women is so tame compared to yours? To be sure there *are* female adventurers who make voyages to India, and inhabit there! I almost fear your descriptions of the pleasures and splendour you will certainly find there, may inspire me with a

desire of being enrolled amongst them. When I hint at this possibility, papa frowns and mamma looks grave, and they thank heaven, that at present their fortunes have not taken so desperate a turn as to compel them to consign their eldest daughter to the Indian market! Of course, this is a species of thankfulness in which I very dutifully join; at the same time I must confess, that I often detect myself sighing over the monotony of existence at the manor-house, and *almost* venturing to think that the excitement of peril by field or flood might be preferable.

Well, to pass over my thoughts and foolish fancies, which, as you know, float through the brain of woman ‘like the gay motes that people the sunbeam,’ let us turn to the splendours of your experience. Behold you landed,—welcomed by the hosts of influential people to whom your letters will introduce you, and then setting off to join your regi-

ment. My imagination often pictures the train of camels with their tinkling bells that will attend you ; your array of tents pitched on the boundless plain ; and your stately elephant almost so sagacious as to understand your behests. You have luxuriated on the delicious pine,—the juicy melon,—the purple grape,—the oriental date,—the Scriptural pomegranate, and the unparalleled mango, — and you have remembered with disdain the paltry produce of European gardens. You have probably been introduced at the court of some eastern sovereign, and you have received the *nuzzur* *—(you see I am not a forgetful pupil ; I remember every Hindostanee word you have taught me)—with which they, more royally munificent than the sovereigns of the West, welcome the appearance of the stranger. And you have seen the splendid array of

* Present.

nobles, appareled in vests of gold and silver embroidery, their turbans glittering with crescents of gems, and their weapons brilliant with the spoil of the diamond-mines. You have borne away some memento of your visit to this foreign court, — a costly jewel, or, perchance, an imperial cachemire. You are meditating how you shall get it conveyed with safety to your affectionate Mary, and are at a loss to whom to entrust it, resolved nevertheless not to delay beyond the first promising opportunity. I know you will acquit me of every selfish feeling, when I tell you how I should prize such a token of your love. I should feel such delight in exhibiting it to the Bunburys, and Jameses, and Joneses, as the gift of the Nizam or Rajah, or perhaps of Runjeet Singh himself! And after all, the good derivable from the possession of such things is the pleasure of being envied by one's

very dear friends. I dare say this is sorry morality, but it has the advantage of being at any rate truly feminine.

I conclude you are by this time pleasantly settled with your regiment. I never go to bed without thinking of the delightful mode in which your existence must pass. In my mind's eye I see your bungalow,—the walls of pure white, emulous of marble,—a terraced roof,—a colonnade of graceful pillars running round every side of it,—a broad pavement,—a delicious garden abounding in flowers of gorgeous hues, and refreshed by fountains constantly throwing up their glittering waters in the air, gladdening you by associations of coolness, and soothing you by an incessant murmur, like the sound of a distant waterfall. Then in the night all your poetical visions are realised by the song of the plaintive *bulbuls* that throng about your roses; and if your

sleep be disturbed, you can hardly regret it, as it originates in such "a concourse of sweet sounds." The morning dawns; you are awakened by the blast of the spirit-stirring trumpet, summoning you to take your part in the glorious mimicry of war. Then follows the sumptuous breakfast, of which I have heard so much, participated with half-a-dozen of your brother-officers, young and gallant spirits, who have always a word to cheer and a right-hand to aid you. Afterwards I see you in your palanquin,—that most voluptuous of carriages, so far as I can understand its nature,—making a tour of visits, amusing yourself with a little scandal here,—enjoying the recreation of an innocent flirtation there,—welcomed by everybody, as Frank Arnold must be, let him inhabit what part of the globe he may. Then succeeds the gay revel of the mess-dinner,—the evening-ride,—a ball, a sup-

per, or a social chat with two or three chosen companions. Such is the tenor of *your* existence, my dear brother, and as I have enumerated the enjoyments in the midst of which it passes, I am ashamed of the selfishness of that affection which still regrets your absence, and wishes you yet a participator in the home-spun sobrieties of an English country life.

Have you met with any pearls worth procuring? I should so like a necklace. The one papa gave me on my last birthday is not nearly so handsome as that of Arabella Somers, whom you remember you detest, and with reason, for if ever woman jilted man most abominably, she was guilty of doing so. I confess I *am* ambitious of outshining her when we are presented, which is to take place about this time next year, so that if you *should* be so fortunate as to procure me a *very* hand-

some necklace, either pearls or emeralds, I care not which, and I am told they are equally plentiful, and to be had almost for the picking up, I shall have an additional reason to rejoice in the attachment of my kind and favourite brother.

Papa desires me not to forget to enquire what you suppose will be the amount of your first year's savings, living at the same time as becomes your position, which it is his particular desire you should do. We understand that all the necessaries of life in India are ridiculously cheap; a dozen fowls for half-a-crown, a sheep at the same price, and every thing else in proportion. I hope you will not marry, as I am not particularly anxious to do so myself. (By the by, Charles Willoughby married Jane Hargrave last week; I do not think his manner to *me* quite justifiable, do you?) And a few years hence, when you return a wealthy nabob, you must invite me to

be your housekeeper. Do not fear that I shall not do credit to your oriental splendour. I am reading all the Eastern tales I can get hold of, to fill my mind with such ideas as are likely to be most consonant to your taste. I am sure I shall have no objection to diamonds by daylight if you wish it.

Do write soon and frequently. Tell us every particular of your voyage, mode of life, what you have seen, what you have felt. If you mean to send any thing, be minute in describing how we are to obtain it. Mamma is very anxious for preserved ginger and pickled limes. These are trifles which, for my own part, I do not care about; but they will please mamma, and cost you nothing.

Little Fanny would like an ivory work-box, and if you thought it worth while to send a few card-cases with it, we should be glad to give them to the Simmonses, and such of our neighbours as are really your friends.

Do you know, my shawl is getting very shabby. *When* you can afford it, think of me for a cachemire.

Papa, mamma, and all of *us*, send you as many kind loves as *you* can wish for. Be sure to write by every ship. Believe me, my *dearest* Frank,

Most affectionately, yours,

M. A.

P. S. If you should send me a cachemire, do not let it be *black* ; I should so greatly prefer a red or white. Let it be square, and of the Harlequin pattern, which is most admired in England. Perhaps mamma might think it undutiful, if you were not to send her one at the same time. I know she is not particular either as to colour or pattern. I should be sorry if you were to hurt her feelings in any way, as I am sure you would be excessively grieved to do

so. Therefore, I have thought it better to give you this hint.

P. S. I had quite filled the paper, save this little bit under the seal, without reminding you of the Bandanas. Papa was saying the other day, that he wanted a new stock of pocket-handkerchiefs; but it would not be worth while to purchase new ones, as Frank would be certain to send him a supply on the very first opportunity. As I know his taste, it would be wrong in me to neglect telling you that he prefers those with a *white* ground and coloured border; and indeed, we all think them by far the most gentlemanly. God bless you! take care of yourself, and *pray* be accurate in informing us when we may expect the joyful intelligence of your being a field-officer. I fear it will not be these ten or a dozen years. However, the sooner the better.

No. 2.

THE REPLY.

MY DEAREST MARY,

YOUR letter, the first you addressed to me after my departure from England, reached me last week. In truth, it has taken me five entire days to overcome the risible ideas which have been awakened by it. It is impossible for mortal man to read it, and compare the extravagances in which your fancy has luxuriated with the existing order of things, without losing every particle of gravity, even were his philosophy as melancholy as that of Heraclitus. So, my little sister has been recreating herself in her leisure hours with visions of the "gold and jewels, and costly array," in which she is to be clad from the store-houses of the East, her excellent brother Frank being the medium of conveyance. *Frank the rich nabob!* is not that

the character in which I am to re-appear within the paternal halls? When *will* the generality of English people think it a component part of an ordinarily decent education, to attain some accurate idea of the real state of things in this the most important of their colonies?

To begin at the beginning. On landing I went, under the care of an officer sent on board for the purpose, with all my brother cadets, to the cadet quarters, and my letters of introduction were not delivered until the following day. However, that they might do me all the good they could, I got into a hired palanquin soon after breakfast, and was carried by half a dozen dirty and ragged black fellows to the houses of two or three of my excellent friends *in posse*. It was my fortune to find most of them out, that is, being officials, they had left their dwelling-houses for their various offices in Black Town, and were not expected to return before evening. The servants seemed rather

shy of admitting me into the presence of the *Bebe Sahib*; that is to say, the wife of the person on whom I might happen to be calling. I gained admission to the presence of one female only, and was treated with very sufficient disdain; so that my regret at the repulses I had hitherto met with, was converted into the much more pleasurable feeling of satisfaction. This conduct on their part may be as inexplicable to you as it was to me; a sentence will solve the mystery. Rank is as highly appreciated in the East as in the West, and obscurity has no more honour *here* than *there*.

That you may not live in ignorance of the real dignity of my position here, I must tell you that the expectations in which we had so confidently indulged of my being posted as ensign immediately on my landing, were doomed to be very seriously disappointed. Those golden days are gone by. Reduction is the grand

regulator of the order of things at present. The diminution of two companies in every regiment has, of course, caused a large surplus of officers in the two junior ranks, and the consequence is, that until those, now denominated supernumeraries, are brought on the strength of the several regiments, or, as it is *officially* termed here,—“until they are **ABSORBED**,” the lucky youths who constitute the new arrivals, may rejoice for some time in the dignified distinction of being Messrs. Cadets A, B, C. &c. &c. to the end of the alphabet, and may luxuriate in all the splendours which the stipend attached to that rank can afford. So, my dear Mary, you must carry your thoughts through a rather more extended vista than *ten or a dozen years*, when you figure to yourself your brother Frank a *field-officer*; because, in all probable calculation, he will at that period be about achieving the honours of a Lieute-

nancy. Therefore, never forget, when you are decorating him, in your mind's eye, with the insignia of the majority, to add the inevitable accompaniments of *wrinkles and grey hairs*. Military rank here, henceforward, must be in invariable union with old age. Subordination is the destiny of *militaires* through the prime of life, and they arrive at the honours of command precisely when they are so worn out with the effects of the climate, as to be fit only for that retirement which is the coveted shelter of decaying bodily strength and mental endowments.

I have again looked through your letter, to assure myself that I leave nothing unanswered ; but really you are entangled in such a maze of brilliant errors, that I scarcely know how to extricate you, and am full of compassion for the pain you will endure at the “ baseless fabric of *your* vision.” “ *My* travelling array

of camels and elephants, and tents!"—the elegant pavilion which, I suppose, you fancy is pitched for my reception at the end of each day's march, in reality covers about twelve square feet of ground; is surrounded by a single wall, called here a *khenaut*, of coarse cloth, white outside, and lined with blue of the same fabric. A pole of bamboo supports it in the centre; a table, chair, and cot, constitute its furniture; and these very materially damaged before the journey is half performed. Half a dozen bullocks suffice to carry my tent from station to station, as well as the residue of my traps. My table equipage is composed of two plates, as many dishes, a single knife and fork, and the two or three articles of silver, which were my godmother's parting gift, being, if you remember, three spoons of different sizes, a fork, and a cup, the latter being really a most useful appendage, for the frangibility of glass

makes it no desirable addition to one's baggage. As to the luxuries I enjoy, *beer* is about the greatest; but it is too expensive to permit a consumption equal to my wishes, or indeed my wants. I am gradually *endeavouring* to leave off wine, a beverage which, as not *absolutely* necessary, I deem it incompatible with the state of my finances to continue. The severest economy is incumbent on me, who would not willingly distress my father by drawing on him to any large amount. But notwithstanding my reluctance, I have found myself compelled to give a shopkeeper here a bill on him for seventy pounds, which I had great difficulty in persuading the man to accept: of course my father will honour it, because my credit is at stake, and its being returned would be attended with the most serious consequences, as I should probably be brought to a court-martial for a fraudulent transaction. I do not feel much

anxiety about the matter, as I am sure my father will see the impossibility of my performing a two months' journey on the miserable pittance which constitutes the pay of a cadet.

Now, having got over my march, let me carry you, my visionary sister, to my bungalow, with *its shining white pillars like marble, its terraced roof*, and all its oriental beauty and comfort. You will picture to yourself four mud walls, white-washed, enclosing a space of sixteen feet by fourteen. These are covered with thatch, part of which has been removed by a late severe wind, called here a *pishash*—I suppose because it is believed to be the flapping of the wings of a demon, the native word signifying devil. The roof extends in a sloping direction about two feet beyond the walls, and is supported by bamboos of about the thickness of the wrist, and

of no order of columnar architecture known to Europeans. I should describe them, if obliged to limit myself to a *definition*, as *fantastic*. Having thus painted the externals of my demesne, let us, my fair sister, penetrate the interior. In vain you raise your eyes to view the ceiling. Instead of it, you behold the beams of the roof placed anglewise, and meeting at the summit. The interstices are filled up with reeds, over which the straw is placed. Wait a little, and you will see the most numerous of my visitors. There! that is a large rat running so nimbly from beam to beam; I do suspect he is captain of the quadrupedal banditti, who commit nightly depredations on my wardrobe. Fancy yourself in a sound sleep, suddenly disturbed by the unexpected descent of one of these marauders on your head, to the imminent peril of the proportions of "the human face divine."

This, my dear Mary, is one of the *luxuries of the East*, in the nightly enjoyment of which I am revelling.

With regard to the fruit which you enumerate as one of the delicacies spread out to regale me, let me admonish you that it does not grow *quite* spontaneously; and that to attain any degree of excellence, it must have proportionate culture. Mangoes, *when good*, are delicious; but commonly exhibit only a most undesirable mixture of tow and turpentine. Grapes do not flourish in the part of India to which my experience for the next few years is likely to extend. You *may* find very excellent pines if you have patience to cut a sufficient number. As to the courts of native princes, I think the last faint shadow of their glory set with the sun of Tippoo. I am told that Runjeet Singh still exhibits manifold specimens of the splendours of the “golden

orient," but I am some two or three thousand miles from *his* territories; and my services are never likely to be put in requisition for any duty that may approximate me to his abode. In short, my dear Mary, if you aim at the knowledge of truth, rather than the indulgence of visions that have no existence beyond the realm of romance, I counsel you no longer to regard the Arabian Nights as a text-book, but to confine your fancy within the scope of your brother's veracious descriptions, by which means you will probably become contented with England, and leave India to the enjoyment of more destitute aspirants.

And thus, my dear Mary, all your visions of cachemires, black, red, and white, of pearls and emeralds, crumble to the dust! The days of *nuzzurs*, as you accurately write the word, are over, and the cost of these things is, as

you will conclude, rather beyond the scope of means so scanty as mine. As far as depends on your affectionate Frank, I almost fear you must be contented with your old pearl necklace, and allow yourself to be eclipsed by Arabella Somers, jilt as she is. Acquit me of all indifference to your vexations, by picturing to yourself my exile from every human being who cares in the least whether I live or die, with the addition of a purse so scantily furnished as absolutely to be unequal to the supply of my real wants. As to amusements, there is, to use the Irishman's phrase, a plentiful scarcity of them. The regiment with which I am doing duty, garrisons a small fort, which consists only of the strength of one corps; consequently, my range of society is circumscribed by a dozen officers, not half of whom are companionable. Three of the seniors are married

men, and not accessible except in the way of morning calls of etiquette, or in compliance with formal invitations. Two are, what is called, *cut dead* by the rest, for sundry acts which, if proved, ought to send them to add to the colonists of New South Wales. One, by aiming at keeping the peace with all parties, though *endured* is disliked by each; and the others, my companions in subalternship and its consequent poverty, are so many additional arguments against sending out young men to India, when a single prospect of decent existence is holden out to them *at home*. Read this part of my letter to my father, and entreat him to be hopeless of bandanas, so far as I am concerned. Alas! my dear Mary, if his only hope of procuring them were limited to the means of his dutiful son, I fear the remainder of his existence would pass with a *Spitalfields* in his pocket

Write punctually. Europe-letters, as our Eastern phraseology terms them, are treasures here, and expected with proportionate anxiety. Nothing would be more acceptable than a few new novels, if you have any pocket-money to spare. We have no book-society in our regiment; and our means of *cultivating literature* are confined to the private stock of each officer, none boasting a library more extensive than mine, which also is by a few years the most modern. The *march of intellect* progresses in a more westerly direction than the shores of India. By the way, tell my mother that her injunctions of regular attendance at church must be violated, however strong my inclination to fulfil them might be. The topes round this garrison have never yet "smiled when a sabbath appeared," or waved their branches to "the sound of the church-going bell." The Commandant of the station, like Gallio, "cares

for none of these things;" and as there is no place of public worship where the dozen Christians here can assemble at stated intervals, and he, the most influential person, not offering his own house as a substitute, a fatal lethargy is creeping over the spirits of the unhappy few under his dominion, who, despising his opinions on all other points, unfortunately emulate his indifference on this. You would be shocked; even I, alas! who have thought far less on this most important subject than I ought, *am* shocked, at the callous disregard with which my associates contemplate death and eternity. Their constant liability to dangerous diseases and sudden death has only the effect of hardening them into insensibility; and it seems that their privations in this world are attended with the invariable result of rendering them careless of the duration of their present existence, and

thoughtless of another. In a word, my dear Mary, I sincerely wish my father had mounted me on a high stool behind a desk in a counting-house, rather than consigned me to a life which offers nothing to gratify either the intellect or the heart.

As my lot is now irrevocable, conceal from my mother my dissatisfaction with it. How gratified she was when I tried on the gorgeous scarlet before my departure, and exhibited myself in all the glory of plume and sword ! What maternal pride beamed in her eye ! Alas ! shall I ever see that glance of approbation and love shining on me again in this world ?

God bless you, my dear Mary, and preserve you from the shores of India ! Once more, write often.

Your affectionate brother,

F. A.

P. S. Do you not think it possible, that my father could procure a few really beneficial letters to people who are in power here ? not mere introductions, such as I brought out, which are never worth more than a dinner each, but *pressing* me on the notice of the *influential*. The Commander-in-chief, Sir ¹³⁴⁷⁹——, is the person who *could* do most for me, but the Governor *might* do much ; his recommendation, as you may suppose, is never wholly without weight. After these, the Adjutant-general has every good appointment at his disposal ; and indeed I am not sure that he is not the most influential person of the three. He can, at least, always mar a man's advancement, by insinuations professedly the result of his experience, an advantage which the more dignified personages I have alluded to, can never possess. They, for the greater part, come to this country in complete ignorance of every thing

connected with it, and in nothing is this deficiency more glaring than on military matters. They have such a host of prejudices and party views, that nothing but *strong* interest can set them aside. If I recollect, the present Commander-in-chief is connected by marriage with the Lieutenant of our county; and as my father is a friend of his, he might easily procure a letter, which would be of the greatest service to me. I am studying Hindostanee, for the sake of occupying my wearisome leisure hours, rather than from the expectation of its eventually proving a stepping-stone to my advancement. Griffin as I am, I have discernment enough to perceive that ignorance is a sin only in those whose interest has diminished; and that *boobyism* is by no means an impediment to the progress of those whom Commanders and Governors "delight to honour." However, beg my father to exert

himself in procuring letters in my behalf, and leave the rest to me. Once more, adieu ! would that I had never quitted England !
Ah ! spes vana hominum !

No. 3.

FROM AND ON ENGLAND.

MY DEAR OTTLEY,

YOUR letter was one of the highest gratifications I have enjoyed for some time. News from the old 100th is always welcome ; and when it comes, coupled as it was with the tidings of so fine a step for the whole corps as the retirement of a Major just promoted, it could hardly fail of being most acceptable. I am as surprised as yourself at the marriage of Marchmont ; I always looked on him as a certain step, but of course a wife and family put it out of the question, unless she brings

him fortune enough to render retirement practicable, which I should think is not the case in this instance, for Marchmont was as unlikely to win a conquest worth having as any officer of my acquaintance. However, the taste of women is a thing not reducible to any rational principles, and in the magnificence of their caprices one of them might consider Marchmont a *preux chevalier*. May it be so! If he will but take himself out of our way, I shall not quarrel with the means.

You perceive, my dear Ottley, notwithstanding all my former declarations that I would return to India no more, I am considering the affairs of the 100th with the not-to-be-mistaken interest of a person by no means intending to dissolve his connexion with it. In fact, I shall apply for leave to return before the expiration of my furlough, and you may probably see my name in G. O. to that effect by the time this letter reaches you. You give

some hints of an intention of applying for yours, and state that it is not loss of health which is your inducement, but the desire of renewing your acquaintance with your connexions, and indeed with the face of English society generally. Excellent motives so far as they go, but attended in the fulfilment with certain inconveniences, for which I think myself bound to prepare you.

I think you will allow, that no man ever longed with more ardent desire to revisit his native land than I did ; that it was impossible to *bore* one's friends with more tedious raptures on the expected meeting with friends and relatives than I inflicted ; and in short, that to experience the delights of England was the leading wish of my heart,—the means of doing so “ my thought by day, my dream by night.” “ Surrounded by those who love me,” I was accustomed to say, “ encircled by faces that

will beam with joy at my approach, it will be easy to submit to the privations attendant on the loss of Indian allowances; 'sweet is a dinner of herbs where love is!' &c."

Establish it in your heart and brain, my dear Ottley, as an elementary truth of the first importance, that in no country in the world is *wealth* so absolute a necessary of life as in England. Without it, talents, virtues, even rank itself, avail not. The possession of it confers immediately respectability, intellect, all the Christian graces, on him, who, before the charm was in his grasp, was pitied as a driveller, or shunned as of *equivocal* honesty at best.

I have no reason to complain of the coldness of my reception. I had embraces enough from my hundred cousins to satisfy even a Frenchman, and their enquiries after all I had seen and felt during my absence, displayed

curiosity enough to employ the most garrulous person that exists. This was all very well for a few days, but when familiarity blunted the first fine impression, there ensued sundry hints about the beautiful cachemires,—ivory-work, —precious stones, &c. which abound in India, and which, I was told, were so highly valued in England! These aforesaid hints became at length too intelligible to be misunderstood, and I was compelled in self-defence to avow my poverty, and plead it in excuse for the deficiency of all those gifts of *bijouterie* in which the female heart delights. One good effect followed this avowal. I was no longer annoyed by the conflicting invitations of uncles, aunts, and cousins, to share myself amongst them,—to dispose of parts and parcels of myself here and there, like the lady in “the Facardins.” I was quietly permitted to carry into effect my resolution of retiring to the in-

dependence of a small lodging, and have never since found myself pestered either with their society or correspondence.

Prepare yourself, my dear Ottley, before setting your foot on English ground, for the sacrifice of every luxury which in India you hardly class by that name, and of the value of which you are scarcely sensible until you suffer under their deprivation. With *your* income, wine is as forbidden as if you were the most rigid observer of the Koran that ever wore turban, or pronounced a *bis m'allah*! Beer of course abounds, but in London even that is not cheap; and, oh spirit of Hodson! "how most unlike the beer I loved so well!" Spirits are under the same prohibition as wine. If you *do* venture hither, I advise you immediately to become a member of THE ORIENTAL, where all these things are to be procured at the cheapest possible rate, and where, more-

over, you are quite sure of society by whom your feelings will be understood and reciprocated. Believe me, this is no trivial consideration. There is nothing in the world more difficult than for a stranger to find himself admitted in an English circle. The thing is in fact impossible without introduction, the giver of which becomes in a way responsible for your propriety of position and morals,—a bondsman in fact for the debt you owe to civilization. That charitable Indian custom of permitting the stranger to make the first call, cannot of course exist in England; there the position of every individual is understood at once,—all are officials; but how different *here*! Even when you *do* gain admittance, an air of chilling coldness forces on your memory that you are a stranger, received only on sufferance; and well would it be for you if this perception does not benumb your faculties,

and freeze you into the same reserve which pervades everybody about you.

In this country too, a man with a limited income, must perpetually be annoyed by all the common-places of existence. No clever, if peculating* *dubashee* stands between him and the butcher, the baker, the washerwoman, &c. All these people must constantly come "between the wind and his nobility," and he must be contented in his own person to discharge those duties of a *valet-de-chambre*, which have hitherto devolved on one or two maties. Here is neither horse nor palanquin to convey him, at will, from place to place. Through "storm or shine" he must plod his weary way in whatsoever direction his wants compel him to move. Let me tell you, after twenty-two years passed without incurring this necessity, it is somewhat grievous. It is to be enumerated amongst

* Butler.

the thousand and one petty stings which incessantly goad one into remembering one's poverty.

Amusements, — public amusements, attract one at every step ; but then one cannot enjoy them without paying for them, — a condition quite incompatible with the economy forced on the possessor of a small income. I know not whether their abundance is not to be enumerated amongst the evils he has to encounter ; if his inclination lie that way, he is placed in the situation of Tantalus ; if it do not, why then of course they cease to exist for him, and he might as well be in India where they are not procurable. To be sure, there are public libraries on all sides, admittance to which is not ruinously expensive. But these are considerations chiefly with men of science and literature, to which class militaires, you know, do not generally belong. Reading is very well

in its way, but a man of the world cannot be everlastingly poring over books.

As to the climate, it is all very well in summer when it does not happen to rain, that is to say, for about three weeks in the year. The almost constant moisture of the atmosphere has a cruel effect on a constitution injured by a long abode in India. Rheumatism, depression of spirits, affections of the liver, are its invariable consequences, and the hot-wind, at its most furious height, is preferable. Then the winter, this present Christmas-time, its horrors are indescribable by any power of pen ! Imagine me in a dark apartment,—Stafford Place, Pimlico ; the room enveloped in a twilight occasioned partly by the damp hanging on the windows, and partly by the smoke. Half-a-dozen chairs, two tables, and a dingy sofa, complete its furniture ; a china-dog, monkey, shepherd and shepherdess, on the mantel-

piece, and a small looking-glass above it, its decorations. How often, think you, my mind recalls my bungalow at Madras, with its spacious hall, its noble veranda, and its gay compound! How often, as I endeavour to catch a glimpse of the cloudy sky that hangs over this smoky world, does my fancy recal the bright unclouded azure heavens which shines down so gladly on the land I have left! No; after two-and-twenty years spent there, a man has no taste left for English obscurity and English privation.

In a word, my dear Ottley, I am, as I told you at the commencement of my lengthy letter, about to return to the old 100th with all possible despatch. I suppose I shall find you at a new station, and, I hope, blest with a new commandant. Luckily, if there has been a change, it cannot be for the worse. However, you will find me no longer amongst the grum-

blers. What is the want of promotion compared to the absence of all the luxuries of life? nay, even of its comforts? As to the command, I must get it in time, and I shall wait patiently a few years, and enjoy myself quite as well in the interval as if I were, where nevertheless I ought to be from my length of service,—at the head of the 100th.

Salam to all the lads; I hope they get on well. I trust Y and Z are better friends than they used to be; the comfort of the mess was completely destroyed by their incessant bickerings. I wish I could get a dog or two for P. but the trouble they are on board prevents my seeing after them: I dare say I shall find him well supplied, and probably, as he lost his company allowance by the late reduction, he would hardly thank me for bringing a fresh expense on him. Do the ladies agree better together than they did when I quitted? I wish we had not a

single woman in the regiment. Where they are there is an end to all cordiality ; the everlasting jealousy of precedence would tire the patience of any chamberlain, who had had to regulate the etiquette of a German Court for twenty years. Tell C. I hope I shall not find that he has brought another female on the corps. His innumerable flirtations make me tremble, and he is really so excellent a fellow, that I should be sorry to see him ruined by marriage. In fact, I consider an officer quite lost to the regiment, immediately he becomes a married man.

If you should have marched to another station, look out for a comfortable bungalow for me, and take care that the verandas are good. On my arrival I shall put up with you until I can make myself snug in my own quarters. Till then, believe me, my dear Ottley,

&c. &c. . .

No. 4.

ANOTHER VIEW OF THE SAME SUBJECT.

CONGRATULATE me, my dear Villars ; that is to say, if my long silence has not made you forswear all interest in me and my concerns,—congratulate me on having been six months in this paradise,—“this earth, this land, this England,” —“this beauteous gem set in the silver sea ;” and laud we the gods, as being so provided with the goods of this life as to quit it no more. The incessant whirl of delights in which I have been engaged since I landed, has, in truth, been the cause of my protracted silence. I have never forgotten you ; always wished you to be the sharer of my enjoyments, and yet could not bring myself to sit down for the purpose of writing a letter long enough to make it worth sending to India.

Line steps, thank heaven, are nothing to me now. To you—would it were not so!—they are unfortunately still important, therefore I shall put you in good humour by informing you at the very commencement of the volume I am meditating, that *two* have just occurred, old Saunders and Manners, both dead. They have been quite long enough on the strength of the army, for which you are indebted to that abomination, the off-reckonings. Once in England, these old fellows with the means and appliances of life afforded by their income, live for ever, and promotion, as far as they are concerned, seems at a dead stand. Gout and asthma have been your friends on the present occasion. If I do not mistake, this will promote your Major,—no longer *mine*, great is my thankfulness!—and bring you within a step of your Company. As soon as you have gained it, come home, my dear Villars, come home!

Stay if you can ; but if not, at least for a short three years make yourself acquainted with the haunts of civilized mankind, and, on your return, let your one thought be to *accumulate*, with the view of pitching your tent here *permanently* at the earliest possible period.

I left the ship as we neared the British shores, in the very first boat, and landed at Falmouth. I put myself outside the mail, and travelled through as fine a country as ever gladdened mortal eyes, shining in all the youth, beauty, and glory, of one of the brightest days of an English spring. The air was all balm and freshness ; the earth covered with a verdure that outrivals the emerald ; “ meadows trim with daisies pied,” yea, sprinkled over with them as the sky with stars ;—birds singing in every tree, yes, actually *warbling*, Villars ; no cricket-like chirping like the note of the feathered tribes of the East ; full,

clear warbling, such as befits "the lark that at heaven's gate sings." Then the living figures in the picture, the stout English peasant, — the buxom English dame, — the rosy *white* children playing in the streets of every village, happy in health and in rags ; the cattle of size indicative of the thriving nature of the climate ; the dogs healthy and cleanly, never shocking the sight with the unutterable loathsomeness of those unfortunate curs, we call in the East, pariahs. He must indeed have neither eye to see nor heart to feel, who is insensible to the immense difference that exists, between the land he has quitted and the land he inhabits : how immeasurably to the advantage of the latter !

Behold me in the drawing-room of my father's house ! You will not expect me to paint the almost insane rapture of the meeting between myself and my family ; how I was

shown the favourite pony I had left ten years since, so carefully groomed, so fondly caressed, so easily worked, albeit one of the ugliest of his tribe, for the sake of the exiled one he had so often carried ; how I was conducted into the flower-garden, and my own particular plot exhibited, blooming in violets and primroses, the flowers, with which, in my boyhood, I had loved to see it decorated. All these things may seem trivial to you, Villars, but I cherish them as evidences of an affection that passes not away, and rejoice that I did not remain in India, until I had lost the power of feeling the blessedness that lies within their circle.

The merest trifle I had brought from India, was admired, and is preserved as carefully as Catholic ever preserved his relic. A pair of Mussulmaun slippers, a slip from a cotton-tree, the nest of a tailor-bird, a dried cobra-capella, Hyderabad rice-ornaments, two card-

cases, trifles which cost me nothing, and are so precious to the dear ones around me. These are treasured in the cabinet of my sisters with as much pride as if they had been the spoils of the diamond mine, or the richest product of the Persian loom. They compute their worth not at their intrinsic value, but as evidences of the affection of him who bestowed them, and whose gifts were measured by his means.

You cannot yet have forgotten all the joys of a country-life at spring-tide, the long walks through fields redolent of hay, which puts to shame all the perfumes of the East, and the gay variety of flowers which make a whole garden one vast bouquet. No state of existence *can* be more blissful; the neighbourhood enlivened by a society, if not extensive, yet composed of sensible well-informed persons, friendly to the improvement of human intellect, and giving their opinions a double value by ex-

hibiting, in their own persons, proofs of the superiority conferred by mental attainment. I quitted ——— with regret, although on a visit to this magnificent capital, the emporium of all that adorns, enriches, or enlightens the world. The most stupid of men must find something to amuse, something to beguile him of his dulness, in various London. He cannot walk the streets without being struck by the incessant novelties presented to him at every step. To a new arrival like myself, the gay decorations of the shop windows were more attractive than perhaps consisted with the comfort of the swarm of pedestrians who passed me, not without sundry elbowings bestowed with hearty good will, and borne very patiently. I can put up with the oddities of John Bull, for the sake of participating in his enjoyments.

It is astonishing how much amusement you

may obtain at the smallest possible modicum of expense. What can be more attractive than the picture-galleries, to each of which the admission is *one shilling*, of course within the compass of a very limited income? Then the panoramas are by no means despicable. I have entered half-a-dozen, and being particularly struck with the fidelity of the representation of the panorama of Madras, think myself bound to take the others upon trust. Then the theatres, lectures, and various exhibitions, offer endless resources to a man who has not a single acquaintance in this vast city. In short, Villars, London to be understood must be seen.

Save, my dear fellow, save. Any privation in India is amply compensated, if it do but enable you to return to your native land. I fear your visit will not exceed the duration of your furlough; but though the glimpse into Paradise may make the desert appear ten

thousandfold more terrific, who would therefore refuse to look on it? Come and renovate your intellect, your tastes. Look out upon the broad regions of civilization, and gather their riches. Three years at home will do more towards enlarging your views, and *bringing up arrears of knowledge*, than the contents of all the reading-societies in India. Here there is always floating on the surface of society a quantity of information worth acquiring, and which also has the effect of awakening the dormant powers of one's own mind. I actually was not aware of the extent of my attainments, until collision drew forth the latent spark. Instead of the petty personalities which form the chit-chat of Indian coteries, here you will feed on the more masculine food of the politics of Europe; or if inclined to lighter aliment, you will find at every dinner-table people discussing the literature of the

day ; and hard will it be indeed, if, in this scribbling age, you do not fall in with some one who has contributed to it. I allow that access into the domestic circles of people in England is not so easy as in India. How should it? *There* the whole *visiting* world are *visitable*. Here, in the countless multitudes that compose the London population, how many circles exist that know nothing of each other ! and who can expect to be received in any one, without some credentials to prove that he is what he appears? But *once* admitted, the formality of the *first* reception over, how he rejoices over the English warmth of heart, as it expands on more intimate acquaintance ! I allow that John Bull is difficult of access, but the sincerity of his friendships, the sterling value of his character, abundantly overpay the obstacles that lie in the way of making his acquaintance.

Do not, my dear Villars, dream of remaining until your full period of service is completed. After two-and-twenty years in India, a man becomes unfit for English society; in fact, he is *beneath its level*. His intellect is at least a dozen years behind the spirit of the age; he is startled at the new views of things to which the western world is familiar; he is constantly thrusting forwards his worn-out prejudices, and he naturally becomes angry and disgusted when he hears them ridiculed or condemned. Moreover, he has been inured to a thousand habits—luxuries if you will—that have in themselves a tendency to enervate. He cannot endure the rigours of the climate; and instead of shaking away blue devils by exercise on a cloudy day, he mopes in a dim and dusky apartment, over a smoky fire, until all nature becomes invested with the sombre hue that pervades his own mind.

Accustomed to Asiatic servility, he dislikes the independence of his countrymen; habituated to aristocratic ideas of *himself*, he shrinks from the contact of the canaille, and whilst he complains of the exclusiveness of others, is himself *most* exclusive. No, after two-and-twenty years in India, let no man believe that England can ever be an agreeable residence for him; therefore, Villars, save yourself from the mental degradation to which I consider this unfitness equivalent, and take your furlough forthwith.

Salam to everybody who thinks me worth an inquiry. Write much and often. All that concerns you is interesting to me; and I look forward impatiently to the renewal of our friendship in this delicious—*home*. Is there a dearer word in the language? No: therefore let it conclude my letter—Villars, come *home*!

&c. &c.

REMINISCENCES OF SHAIK ISMAEL.

IN the name of the Prophet !

My sons, if ye would learn the pathway to plenty and prosperity, even to the attainment of riches, read the recollections of your father, and deposit them in the store-house of your memory, until the season shall arrive for the planting of the same seed, and, by similar diligence, to the ripening of the same fruit.

I was once, as other men, feeble and without sense. My mother and others about me did with me as they listed. As soon as consciousness dawned, my mother became dearest to me, because I was carried oftenest by her ;

and even when I had learned the art of walking, I preferred being pillowed on her bosom. Happy is he who can always ride; and happier he who is always still,—to whom whatever his wants require, is brought!

This, however, is not the fate of us all. It is written that some must be rich, but many poor. I belonged to the many, and my lot was cast in poverty. I was the son of a sipahi, and an orderly boy in my father's regiment.

My father died. May his soul be with the Prophet! My mother and myself subsisted entirely on my pay, three rupees each month, as the feringhees* count their months. All things were controlled by my mother; and she was wiser than Fatima, the favourite of the Prophet. Whilst our neighbours contented themselves with rice, or on great occasions rejoiced over a vegetable curry, we

Europeans.

had daily delicious pilaus, kibaubs, or curries of the choicest meat. We had sweetmeats and fruits also, and my mother possessed saras of the finest cloth. She was young and fair as Zuleika; and her skill in domestic management was wonderful considering her youth. She was often absent from our dwelling; and once or twice, as I was strolling about the streets of the cantonment, I fancied I saw her in the house of a feringhee officer. But she convinced me of my mistake, by reminding me that such a proceeding was quite against her caste. Therefore I ate heartily of the delicacies she set before me, and asked no farther questions. Her secret, if there were any, perished with her—peace be on her grave!

As I grew older I attracted the notice of the officers, and was at length selected by one of them as an attendant. When I first

learnt that his choice had fallen on me, in bitter indignation I desired my mother to tell the feringhee, that I was well contented with my present condition, and would be my own master, and no man's servant. But my mother was wonderfully persuasive. She set before me how much my future prospects, and all my advancement in the regiment, depended on my consenting to this temporary degradation, as I persisted in calling it; that to refuse would be to stumble on the very threshold; and that a first false step was almost always fatal. Her arguments overcame my repugnance; for how could I refuse to listen to one whose doctrines came recommended by such an illustration of their wisdom, as her own prosperous life?

My new master was an ensign just joined. He was young and ruddy like a pomegranate blossom, and had arrived in my country but

a few months since. He was filled with all the pride and ignorance of the *câfirs*,* and often in my heart I spat on his beard, when necessity compelled me to obey his imperious commands.

My mother listened patiently to the recital of all my grievances. She soothed me to present endurance, by the assurance that vengeance always came at length to him who patiently waited for it; and that the slowest poison was often the surest. I obeyed her counsels, and submitted to every infliction in silent and uncomplaining acquiescence. Meanwhile, I laid up in my memory every grievance that was heaped on me, whether by accident or design, in the full and deep resolution that when the day of payment should come, I would exact the debt my tyrant owed me, with such an interest as might satisfy the

* *Câfir*—Hindostanee, infidel.

most rapacious revenge that ever burnt in the bosom of one of the faithful.

Amongst the many indignities I suffered from him, I still treasure up the remembrance of the first. On the day that my bondage to him commenced, I stood behind him as he ate his meal. He gave me his plate, and told me to eat the meat he had left. In my heart I cursed the *câfir*, who dared cast such dirt on the head of my father's son! I, an unpolluted Mussulmaun, grovel over the food of the unclean infidel, unsanctified as it was by one *bis m'allah*, cooked by a vile pariah? By the beard of the Prophet, if my strength had seconded my will, I had thrust his knife into his breast as he sat there in the might of his tyranny! What I could I did: I dared stripes so that I might spit on him;* and I threw the relics of his abominations to the

* Figurative—meaning to evince great contempt.

outcast dogs that were howling round his thrice-polluted dwelling.

The indignation of the feringhee, ignorant as he was of the customs of the people his nation had enslaved, was aroused. He seized his whip, and I felt the smart of the accursed lash. Each stripe ate into my soul, and by Allah ! by his Prophet ! I swore vengeance *should* come, were its date protracted to the day of white hairs.

By degrees, however, as I became fuller of years and discretion, and better acquainted with the manners of the infidel, I learned to conceal enmity under a smooth brow and a smiling lip, and I set myself to learn the language of the câfirs with indefatigable zeal and assiduity. Shame on them, that they are contented, for the greater part, to rule over a people of whose tongues they know nothing ! Shame on them, that they sit in the judgment-

seats, and decide between man and man, hearing no more than their vakeels choose to communicate; viewing the case submitted to their arbitrament only through the eyes of the interpreter; resolutely overlooking a fact a thousand times forced on their knowledge,—that throughout the land, from the Himalaya to Cape Comorin, *every* vakeel is accessible to bribery, and weighs justice against gold!

Nothing can be more useful than a knowledge of the *feringhee* speech. Without it, my sons, all my industry, all the abilities with which it pleased Allah to endow me, would have availed nothing. How much I gained by my secret understanding of it! Unmindful of my presence, my master and his friends discoursed openly of their most secret concerns, because *Shaik knew nothing!* How often my soul rejoiced at thus gaining information of matters of the highest importance! How I

triumphed in their security, and rejoiced in the discretion which so carefully guarded my secret from them! Often have I repaid the blows of my master, by spreading abroad tidings of the things which he believed locked up in his own breast, and that of his chosen friend. In how many quarrels has he been involved by charging another with a breach of confidence, when circumstances have come to his ears, which he believed unknown to any born of woman, save himself and him to whom he entrusted them! How I spat on his beard, as I watched the torments he endured, ignorant that he was indebted for them to the vengeance of the unforgiving Mussulmaun, whom he despised as his menial, and smote as his bond-slave! Yea! such enjoyments sweetened the cup of servitude, and rendered the draught at length pleasant, even refreshing to my soul.

I profited so well by the instructions of my

mother, and by the more impressive lessons of experience, that my countenance was clothed in perpetual sunshine, and I wore for ever an unclouded brow, on which the feringhee gazed with complacency. I made such rapid advances in his favour, that I became in a short time his confidential domestic; was entrusted with the whole amount of his money, and presided over its expenditure. To be sure, he desired of me an account of the manner in which it had been spent, at the end of each month, and he never found me unprepared. I was ready to show, to the uttermost pice, what had been the disbursements; and whilst often, yea often, he cursed his own extravagance, he was well satisfied with my fidelity. "We must give up this, 'Shaik," he would say; "we must do without the other;" and this *was* given up, and the other *done without*, and yet his debts increased. How often I rejoiced as I saw

him groaning in secret vexation over letters which, I knew, demanded *money* in reply, and retired from his presence to exult over my hoard, which appeared tenfold brighter, when I reflected that it had been wrung from the grasping infidel, and was in part restitution of that of which he had robbed the land our fathers conquered and governed ! Did not *his* *all* belong of right to me and mine ? Had not he and his—dogs, and sons of dogs, as they are,—fattened on the spoils our fathers had bought with their blood ? Who was he ? Who was I ? Why was he master, and I his servant ? Doubtless to fulfil the purpose of the Prophet, that thus a double portion of gold should be taken from the polluted hands of the infidel, to swell the treasure-houses of the faithful !—*Bis m'allah !* (“ Praise to God ! ”)

How it came to pass, I know not,—whether animated by despair, he sought thus to recover

from his embarrassments, or by what urged, ~~is~~ hidden from me; but my master took the control of his expenditure entirely into his own hands, disbursing every cash,* but by necessity employing me or the cook to purchase his supplies. I had lent the cook many rupees, and he, therefore, dared not take one step which I forbade. Consequently, matters were so managed, that our master found himself at the end of his month's experiment, worse off than when all had been entrusted to me. His opinion of my integrity was naturally strengthened, and ever after, when some of his elder countrymen bade him look to me, he repelled their suspicions with disdain, and seemed to me more bent than before on trusting every thing to my honesty.

By this time I was old enough to be enrolled as sipahi, greatly to my terror; for the manner in which the sipahis are compelled to obedience

* A very small coin.

without the possibility of escaping punishment if they refuse to obey, was not at all to my liking. How I rejoiced when I discovered, that I fell full two inches short of the standard height, and in consequence received my discharge ! Nevertheless I prudently concealed my satisfaction beneath a countenance of mortification. So successful was I in playing my part, that my master consoled with me on my disappointment, and to his other consolations added the substantial one of a present of ten rupees. I had a great feast that night at the house of my mother, amongst my own people, and we ventured to drink the delicious wine of the feringhees, which I had taken care to provide from my master's stores at various times. We inhaled the fragrance of the hookah, and told anecdote upon anecdote of the manner in which we contrived that the money of our respective masters should be made to minister to our necessities. It was a cheerful night

that, and I learned more wisdom during the hours I spent in listening to these recitals, than I could have acquired in a hundred lessons of instruction and advice. Nothing is so impressive as example, and it is on that account, my children, that I am binding up in this one sheaf, all the scattered ears that I have picked up in my journey through life, for your special advantage and instruction.

Although my profits in the service of my master were tolerable, I was soon acute enough to perceive, that they were not by one-half so great as I might reasonably expect to realize, as the butler of an officer married to a *fering-hee-bëbë*.* Consequently I soon found a pretext for leaving him by kicking a favourite dog, having first provoked it to attack me, which irritated him so that he discharged me immediately. I believe on the morrow he

* An European lady.

would have recalled me, if I had made the slightest submission, but this would not have answered my purpose. So I obtained a written character greatly in my favour, and offered myself to the Major of my regiment, whose butler had just left him, being resolved to return to his own country, which was at Bunder.

In the course of a few days I was installed in my new office, and in a few more had learned exactly the amount which I could contrive to add to my regular pay. My master's wife was extravagantly fond of dress, and the hawkers who arrived at the Cantonment, laden with the refuse of the shops at the Presidency, were sure to dispose of all their gayest stores to her, and her disregard to the price was just proportioned to her desire of possessing the fine things they exhibited. Of course the folly of the Englishwoman was my gain. I never allowed a hawker to approach the house with-

out exacting from him a larger *custom** than ordinary; and indeed he could well afford it, for my mistress overpaid the value of the goods tenfold. Such, my sons, are the manners of the infidels, who trust so blindly to their wives, deriding our wisdom, who, estimating ~~their~~ weakness and foolishness as they deserve, keep them under wholesome restraint, and find our security in bolts and bars.

I was not long in discovering, that a new source of gain was open to me, if I was discreet enough to turn the opportunity to account. My former master, the young Lieutenant, frequently visited the house of the Major Saib, and his visits occurred generally when the Major was absent. My mother—how she had acquired her wisdom I know not—had

* *Custom* is a word used by natives to describe the *percentage* paid to your head servant on every article which his master purchases. The servants talk of their “custom” openly, regarding it as strictly lawful.

frequently endeavoured to open my eyes to the follies of the Feringhees regarding their women, so that my suspicions, always on the alert, were very soon excited. I was not long before I was in possession of the whole secret, and I presently contrived, that my former master should discover the extent of the knowledge I possessed. His alarm was exactly such as I wished him to feel, and the money he poured into my hand, evinced his desire of securing my silence. Well might he desire it ! These misguided Europeans, who allow so much unseasonable liberty to their wives, instead of punishing them for their infidelity, are contented to meet in single combat the man who has injured them, placing their own lives in jeopardy, and leaving it to chance whether the husband or the seducer is to suffer the punishment due only to the criminal. Vengeance for every stripe the youth had in-

flicted on me, was now within my grasp, and though resolved that it should fall on him, I was too discreet to throw away the gains in my power by hastening the time. I promised not only silence but assistance, and he went away from my presence evidently at ease, convinced, as he said, "that Shaik Ismael would, by his present conduct, prove his gratitude for the favours so long conferred."

Months wore away, and my hoard was rapidly accumulating from the gifts of the guilty pair. Whether long impunity had rendered them careless I know not, but I saw that the time was drawing near when, if I did not reveal the matter to my master, another would, since I perceived that I was not the only one who knew the fact. One evening, therefore, I threw myself in the Major's way when my mistress was absent in her palanquin, and I thus addressed him :

“Saib, a son of the eagle married a daughter of the eagle, and the son of the eagle, trusting to the blood of his tribe, fearlessly left the daughter of the eagle alone in his nest. But though the nest was built on the top of a rock, the son of the sparrow was able to reach it; and the wife of the son of the eagle, forgetting her husband, in his absence admitted the sparrow to his place in the nest.”

I gazed on the face of the Major as I uttered these words, and I watched his eye expand as he turned it full on me, as if he would search into the depths of my darkest thoughts. I met his scrutiny with a calm front, for as truth was on my side, and I had well weighed the consequences of my communication, I was fearless of any ill to myself. He understood my parable, and he grasped my shoulder tightly, as he commanded me to speak out more plainly.

“ I have told all,” said I ; “ if the eagle would see the sparrow in his nest, he has but to wait until to-morrow at sun-set, and he may trust to his own eyes.”

The Englishman paused a moment, and I watched the secret writhings of the infidel with delight. ~~“ To-morrow at sun-set !”~~ he said at length ;—“ you have chosen your time ill, sir ; now I *know* you have lied !”

“ As master pleases,” returned I submissively, for I knew well which way his thoughts pointed. “ Why should I tell this thing, if I were not sure—why should I bring down anger on myself for that which cannot profit me ?”

He mused again. —“ Leave me now ; I will speak to you in the morning,” said he, and I quitted his presence well satisfied of the result.

The morning arrived, and I stood in the outer veranda where my master appeared ready for the parade of his regiment. His face was

so pale that I knew instantly how disturbed a night he had passed ; I did not throw myself in his way, but stood aside until he had looked round for me. As soon as his eye fell on me he beckoned me to him.

“ By the heaven above us,” said he, “ if I find one word of untruth in ~~what~~ what you have told and are still to tell me, this day is the last of your life ! To use the words of your own vile fable, at what hour do you mean to say, that the son of the sparrow will visit the nest of the son of the eagle this night ? ”

“ Master is going to have tiffin at the Colonel’s,” replied I, glad that his question was so unequivocal ; “ after tiffin every gentleman and lady will go to take airing. If master then will come home, he will see with his eyes *the sparrow in the nest of the son of the eagle.* ”

He spoke no more, but vaulting on his horse was instantly out of sight.

The intervening hours were full of perturbation. Do not believe that I repented for a single moment the disclosure I had made, or regretted for an instant that the time had arrived, when I was to reap the full measure of my vengeance on the infidel. My anxiety originated in ^{the} a widely different source. I feared lest some unforeseen event should prevent the interview between my mistress and her lover on this eventful night, and I trembled when I thought on the punishment which, in this case, would inevitably be inflicted on me by my master. Moreover this was my first step in the pathway of *revenge*, and, sweet as was the foretaste of its enjoyment, that path swarmed with serpents. However, I reflected that all things were decreed, and resigned myself to the event to which I was destined.

My master and his wife went to the Colonel's according to invitation. When they had de-

parted, I seated myself in the veranda, with my eyes fixed on the western heavens, watching the declining sun. As he sank beneath the horizon, I heard the cry of my mistress's palanquin-bearers. I ran forward to assist her to alight. In a few minutes my old master the Lieutenant arrived, and I retired to a remote corner of the compound to watch the approach of the Major. Every minute, as it passed away, seemed an age to my apprehensions. At length, as I had admitted the belief that some circumstance or other had induced him to disbelieve my story, I saw him approaching, on foot, with that silent step which intimates desire of concealment. I showed myself, and making signs to him to enter, had the satisfaction of seeing him rush into the house.

In a minute,—in less,—I heard a woman's shriek, and I knew that all was discovered.

Concealing myself in a remote corner of the compound, I saw the lieutenant dart forth, whilst my master followed, using violent gesticulations, and uttering loud menaces. The work was done. I knew that my vengeance had been effectually wrought, and that its completion would shortly be effected by other hands than mine. It was! Before sun-rise the next morning, my first master lay dead, weltering in his blood.

So slowly and so surely did the revenge of the despised Mussulmaun overtake the câfir that had scourged and scorned him.

And thus the Europeans, who affect to despise our usages, and contemn us for the imprisonment of our women, hold up before our eyes daily proofs of the shame brought on them by their too great confidence in a sex evidently created without any capacity of guiding themselves, and altogether unworthy of trust.

My mistress was sent immediately to her own country, and my master did not remain long with his regiment. He was never the same man afterwards, always gloomy and solitary. I fancy he suffered some foolish remorse for having shed the blood of the man who had injured him. Indeed, I have observed that these câfirs, however they may be bent on revenge, have no satisfaction in looking back on its completion. They are filled with vain compunction, and haunted by a thousand terrors, unknown to a true believer. They seem by the act of vengeance, as if they had, in their own estimation changed places, with the offending party, and I do not believe they have a moment's peace after its perpetration. And yet they bring a hundred petty offences to be decided by mortal combat, which a Mussulmaun receives patiently, and repays fourfold, as I did in the present instance.

With my next master I did not live long. He engaged me only to remain with him during the sickness of his own butler, which lasted a whole moon. However, his service was tolerably profitable to me, owing to the following incident.

My temporary master fell sick, and it was thought expedient for him to leave his regiment and proceed to a village ten miles off, where the ground was higher, and the air purer than in the cantonment. I was directed to prepare every thing for the march, which I set about doing with great readiness.

Captain Egmont, that was his name, was a man who disliked trouble much more than he liked money. He looked very little into my accounts, and indeed interfered not at all with his wife's management. She was a Feringhee-bebĕ, and of course little acquainted with our customs, for she had not been many months in

our country. She had plenty of sense for a woman; but how could she discover the manner in which I acted? I persisted in telling her that such and such things were absolutely necessary, and I brought forward the cook to support these assertions; and what could she do? European ladies do not, I have observed, often talk of such matters, so that I did not fear her gaining any wisdom from the gentlemen or ladies who came to visit her. Moreover, very few of them were much wiser than herself, for it seems that the Prophet has blinded the eyes of these misbelievers, who scarcely ever trouble themselves to learn any thing of the customs of the people on whose spoils they live. Well is it for the faithful, and long may it continue to be so!

So I procured bullocks to carry the tents and baggage, and I took care to have two more than were necessary, for my own convenience.

I had the tents repaired also before setting out, and as I had to pay the tailors, neither my master nor mistress understanding much of our language, I did not fail to add considerably to my store. Nothing gives a butler so great an advantage as his master's ignorance of the languages of the country. What cannot the interpreter say ? he can make the price asked by the merchant just what he pleases ; he can favour this man or the other, by reporting, at his discretion, the sentiments of each. In short, he who wishes to thrive will take care to ascertain whether or not his master possesses this knowledge, and, if possible, to live always with one who, by being completely unacquainted with it, is necessarily in his power. What bribes I received from sipahis and native officers, which can be traced only to this cause, to conceal complaints preferred against them ! I had only, when the complainant arrived, to re-

present his grievance ; to tell my master whatever came in my head ; to assure him that the whole matter was frivolous : which never failed to dismiss him from his presence, probably with a good deal of abuse, which I took care to translate faithfully. It is incalculable how many rupees I have, in the course of my life, gained from this source alone.

To proceed with my narrative, which I feel myself obliged occasionally to interrupt, in order that I may impress on you the more forcibly the lessons which it is intended to impart. All things being at length ready, we quitted my master's house for the village to which he was ordered. The tents were pitched long before his arrival, and every thing was in readiness ; for I have ever found it profitable to affect great diligence. It secures not only present approbation, but a good character, which is of great advantage to every

man's career. The spot where we encamped was very pleasant. We were near enough to the village to obtain supplies without fatigue, and at the same time too far to be annoyed by smoke or noise. A tope lay conveniently, where the servants could eat and sleep beneath the shade; a tank was at no great distance: in short, if I had desired only pleasure, I should have enjoyed it here in perfection. But profit was never out of my mind long together, and no man who would thrive, must suffer himself to lose sight of it, how pleasant soever may be the leisure in which he finds himself.

I was not long before I made acquaintance with the potail* of the village. Indeed, the mere ordinary process of buying and selling carried on between me and the villagers, brought us often together, as disputes natu-

* Head man—a petty magistrate.

rally arose when both parties were bent on gaining to the utmost. We very soon, the pottail and I, came to understand each other. In a short time, confidence arose between us, on his side unrestrained; but I confess that I was always too prudent to put any man in possession of more of my secret thoughts than answered my own purposes. From the pottail I learnt, that a regular band of adroit thieves inhabited the village; that he connived at their practices, which was in fact to extend to them the benefit of his protection; that of course he obtained in return for this connivance a large proportion of their spoils; that no traveller ever pitched his tents in the neighbourhood without going away much lighter than he came; that the associates of this band were spread through the neighbouring cantonment, where extensive depredations were constantly committed, of which I was well

apprised; and that, in short, there were very few of the gentlemen who resided there, but had amongst his servants one of the confederates, by whose means access to the several houses marked out for plunder was more practicable than otherwise it could have been, and escape more certain.

I confess I began to feel no inconsiderable shame that I had dwelt so long in this very spot, and had yet been ignorant of the existence of such an infallible mode of getting rich. I was yet too cautious to show the potail the extent of my satisfaction at gaining the information he had imparted. On the contrary, I affected to receive it with considerable distrust, shook my head, and curled my mustachoes with an air of disapprobation, enlarged on the risk of discovery, and praised the prudence of those who pursued the safer path I had hitherto trodden. By degrees,

however, I suffered my scruples to be removed, but not before I was completely in possession of all the details by which the operations of the band were conducted. The potail and I, before we separated, were sworn brothers; and everything was arranged with the utmost precision for the carrying away of my master's valuables.

Unluckily on the very night before the one appointed for our exploit, an officer of my master's regiment arrived at the encampment, for the purpose of spending a few days with him. His tent was pitched hardly a stone's throw from my master's, and the greater part of his own servants accompanied him. Fortunately they were Hindoos, which afforded an excuse for my standing apart from them; but I considered the event vexatious, and hastened to communicate it to my friend the potail. "Bis m'allah!" said he; "we shall

not be disappointed for this. You do not the less know where the trunk stands in which your master's valuables are deposited ; and you can be as alert as if this other accursed câfir were with the dead. There is no need to postpone our plans, and I have always observed, that in such cases nothing is gained by delay."

If not convinced by the reasonings of the potail, I yielded to his persuasions ; and prepared to take the part assigned me in the operations of the succeeding night.

Whilst my master took his evening meal I was absent on a mission to the village, and I did not neglect the opportunity of visiting the potail for the purpose of ascertaining, that no part of our plot had been neglected. Every thing seemed auspicious of success, and I returned to the tents with a heart that exulted at once in the prospect of gain to myself and of

certain loss to an infidel. On my arrival I found the hour of repose had arrived ; my master and mistress had already retired to their sleeping-tent, as their friend had to his. The servants were scattered in various groups ; some were telling stories round a fire lighted within the tope, others rolled up in cumlies,* were already asleep. I went to my master's tent, and found the two sipahis, who were retained as guards, fast asleep between the khenauts. The palanquin-bearers, who were ordered to lie round the tent, had as usual betaken themselves to a distant spot, and were probably engaged in drinking arrack in the village. The cook, insensible from intoxication, was not in a condition to impede my design, and the servants of the stranger were

* A coarse kind of blanket, worn often on the head and shoulders by natives of the lowest order, as a protection from the intense rays of the sun, as well as from rain and cold.

all collected under his own tent-ropes, out of sight of the scene of operations.

The wind rose, which was the most favourable event that could have occurred. As it swept along the plain, and shook the bamboos by which the tent was supported, I was convinced that a footstep far louder than that of a skilful Indian thief might enter without being heard. I looked over the top of the khenauts into the tent, and I saw my master sleeping securely on his cot. His musket stood by his side, but to render that useless had been my part in the matter, and I had removed the flint. The trunk to be taken away stood at the foot of the cot, but unchained; for I had the precaution to loose the chain two days previously. Close to it stood a dressing-table, on which were a lamp, whose light guided me to my present inspection, a dressing-case, which I recognized as belonging to my mistress, and

which I thought contained jewels, a pair of glittering golden ear-rings, several links of coral for the neck and for the arms, the joys,* in short, which she had worn during the day.

I had hardly completed my survey, when I was startled by the distant sound of a collera-horn, breathed however as gently as possible to be audible at the encampment. I listened attentively, and the sound was repeated once and again. I knew that it was the appointed signal, and I crept away to my post. I must confess my heart beat strongly, as this was the first daring action in which I had been engaged. I had a great deal of presence of mind, but fate had not given me much of the quality called courage. I do not know that ever I had reason to regret the want of it; it leads a man to do a thousand rash acts which are rarely of any other use than to teach him to

* The Indian word for jewels.

repent. Prudence is an excellent substitute, and has at the same time the advantage of being a thousand times safer.

As soon as my allies,—there were but two of them besides the potail, the others remaining at a convenient distance to be summoned only to rescue their companions should any of them be taken, or to secure their dead bodies in case of their being killed in an affray, a precaution always observed by men who know their business, as the only means of escaping discovery,—as soon as my allies, then, were within sight of the tents, I approached them cautiously to say that all was safe, and returned to my post with equal silence. Immediately I had spoken with them, they threw themselves on the ground, and crept stealthily onwards with a rapidity incredible to those who are ignorant of the effect of constant practice.

In proportion as the moment approached,

my fears, I confess, increased; and yet I reasoned with myself, I of all the party had least cause for terror. Should my master awake, I knew that the thieves would, according to their invariable practice, betake themselves to flight. If he attempted to fire on them, his gun was useless. Any efforts to seize their bodies by main force would be equally impracticable; they were too well versed in their trade not to have besmeared themselves so completely with oil, that to retain hold of them would have been almost impossible. Should my master call for assistance before the sipahis or the followers could be roused, my allies would be beyond pursuit, and I, mingling with the other servants, did not do my prudence such wrong as to suppose myself incapable of acting the part of a zealous chaser of the delinquents. These considerations were absolutely necessary to enable me to go through the minutes that

intervened between my posting myself at the side of the tent, and the entrance of my confederates within the walls.

The corner seam of the wall nearest the foot of my master's cot having been cautiously cut down, almost before one could breathe, the trunk, the situation of which I had pointed out to them, was removed, and in the hands of the man posted on the outside to receive it. I had a full view, through the gap made to effect an entrance, of all that passed in the interior; and when I saw the box safely carried away, I was well satisfied, and impatient with the thief who remained at the foot of the cot, raising himself cautiously to ascertain whether my master still slept, apparently bent upon adding to his spoil. I dared not speak from the dread of discovery; I was, therefore, obliged to await the progress of his proceedings. Without one sound that could have alarmed the most wakeful ear, he

raised his arm to the table, and took off the dressing-box and the joys. We were, however, near discovery at this point. He had handed them to the man outside, who, to my surprise, had again returned to his post, and was turning himself towards the other part of the tent, when his shoulder shook the table, and a looking-glass, before unobserved, fell to the ground. The season had been dry the last few weeks, and the earth was very hard, so that the fall occasioned a noise which, to my ears, sounded like the thunder. My master stirred himself, as a man does in his slumber, when any noise reaches his senses. My breath was suspended; I was as one ready to die with terror. The robber crouched, and lay with his face close to the ground. After a minute's pause he rose; all was still,—all secure. A khenaut running through the middle of the tent, divided it; he crawled cautiously under the curtain, and ap-

proached the palanquin in which my mistress was sleeping. The doors were closed; I had especially warned the potail, that the palanquin was the place where she slept, and I was dismayed that he had apparently neglected to instruct our confederates to avoid it. My alarm was uncalled for. The robber was well aware who was within. Attracted by a large bag suspended from the front pole, he had resolved to rifle its contents, and having raised himself on his knees, prepared deliberately to examine them. I, who knew that nothing was there which would repay the trouble and danger of the search, could scarcely refrain from venturing a word of impatience. However, I did refrain, and the man, having repeatedly surveyed the whole interior, glided away.

I cannot describe,—nor would it be useful to do so,—my satisfaction, when I saw him disappear, and knew that our booty had been

removed without exciting any alarm. I followed the footsteps of the thieves, and found the potail had already joined them. Without exchanging a syllable, we proceeded together to a neighbouring tank, or rather to the bund which ran along it on the side nearest to the tents, and from which we should be able to discover the least stir in the encampment. Having seated ourselves, one of the party took a stone and broke the side of the trunk, whilst another was equally expert in penetrating into the interior of the dressing-case. The latter, after all, was but a poor prize. The tops of the bottles, in which were perfumes, were not silver, glittering as they looked, and the few jewels that were in it did not pay me for the alarm I had suffered. The trunk disappointed us greatly. In it I had been accustomed every night to deposit the whole of my master's plate. In the hurry of my mind, forgetting that during my

absence at the evening meal the newly-arrived butler had waited, I had overlooked the chance of his conveying it to his own master's tent, and reaped this disappointment as a recompense for my oversight. There were, however, forty rupees in money, and a box of joys belonging to my mistress, my share of which I sold directly to the potail for fifty rupees. Dog as he was, he knew all the jewel-merchants of the neighbouring city, and was well aware that he defrauded me of four times fifty rupees. However, as I have written before, wisdom comes to no man but by the lessons of experience.

We threw aside the clothes which the box contained, as things of no value, save two or three large sheets, which the thieves selected for the purpose of converting into jackets, and a woman's silk garment, which they wanted for turbans, and which, having examined every

thing minutely, they proceeded deliberately to convert into a form convenient for them. They had not, however, completed their self-imposed task, when voices sounded loudly from the tents, and lights moved to and fro, affording a certainty that the loss was discovered. I rose hastily, and flew back to the encampment. Mingling with the other servants, who were making their appearance in all directions, I found that my absence had not been observed ; and affecting equal zeal with the rest, I escaped all suspicion. When, indeed, my master discovered that the flint was removed from his gun, he certainly turned on me a look in which suspicion mingled with inquiry. I bore it, however, without moving a muscle ; for, as I have said, if I had no courage, I had abundant presence of mind, which stood my friend on this occasion. Apparently convinced by the calmness of my countenance, my master began

to censure his own carelessness, supposing that it originated with himself. Fate also befriended me ; for, on trial, my master's friend found that his gun also had sustained some injury, and as I had no access to it, my actual innocence on this point skreened my guilt on the other. We proceeded, therefore, in all directions ; I taking particular care to go as far as possible from the bund which had been the scene of our examining and dividing our booty.

Of course pursuit was by this time vain, and recovery of anything, but what we had considered as of no value, out of the question. The broken boxes were found, and the things we had rejected. To be sure, a large gold ring of my master's was picked up by the dog of a cook, who was fool enough to restore it. It had formed part of my 'spoils, and I had dropped it in the hurry with which I had

quitted the bund. I swore to be revenged on the cook, who was the most impracticable pariah I ever met with. He could speak only Malabar, of which my master did not know a word, which was my security. If the cooking son of a dog had been able to make himself understood, my place would not have been worth having. My master would have saved by his knowledge more than would have paid three moonshees.

My mistress shed a great many tears over the loss of her joys, which I thought the more silly because she seldom wore them. I heard her bewailing some, which I knew to be of no value, because they were the gifts of her own people in her native land. My master consoled her as tenderly as if she had had sense to be afflicted for what were most valuable, and which indeed she hardly mentioned. Half the troubles of these Feringhees have their source

in similar follies. Very few of them forget the cold, sunless place they call *home*, how bright soever the Indian sun may shine on them. Nay, I have heard of young men dying of a complaint they call *home-sickness*, and a *broken heart*. However, I need not delay over these instances of foolishness. May every câfir exhibit the same !

What with grief for her loss, and terror at the danger to which my mistress fancied she had been exposed, she succeeded in persuading my master to return to the cantonment on the following evening. As I said before, I was engaged to remain with him only during the sickness of his own butler, who recovered shortly after this event. I quitted him very well satisfied with the profits I had reaped, and with a character for honesty and diligence, the latter half of which certainly was well deserved.

My next master was a person very different from any I had hitherto served. He knew the Moor language well,—saw into his accounts,—kept his own money, and forbad the hawkers and shopkeepers who came to his house, ever to give his servants custom. He lived a good deal alone, reading and writing often the whole day, except in the evening, when the officers generally met at the house of one of the number. He was very much looked up to by the rest, both on account of his being an old officer, and because he possessed too much sense. Sometimes he talked with me, but it was generally on such matters as the customs of my people, and what the Koran teaches. Often he asked me what I believed, and was not satisfied because I answered only that I was a good Mussulmaun. He inquired if I read the Koran, and if I knew what it contained; how I came to believe in *caste* and

such things, which, he said, the Prophet had never taught, and which we had learned from the Hindoos; why I refused to eat with a Feringhee, although the Persians, who were very good Mussulmauns, did not scruple to do so, taking care to avoid pork—I spit upon it)—and drinking no wine! I told him I knew nothing about such things; that I did as my father had done before me, and that of course my son would do likewise. He used to reason a great deal with me, and I listened patiently, hoping to gain his favour by this means. But he was a *pucka adami*,* and, but for a circumstance that shortly occurred, it would not have been worth my while to keep in his service.

There was great trouble in the regiment at this time, owing to the Jemidar Adjutant, who, irritated at the suspicion with which the Euro-

* This is a peculiar expression used to denote a clever or rather a shrewd man; the word *pucka* means literally *well-built*.

pean Adjutant had for a long time regarded his conduct, had revenged himself by conveying secret reports prejudicial to the Feringhee, to the General of the Division. The General was one of those who remain in our country until they forget their own, and live nearly after the manner of our people. He loved Hindoos and Mussulmauns far better than Feringhees, and in fact the worse the man, the greater the favour he showed him. He lent a ready ear to every servant who chose to visit him secretly and tell his master's concerns, and the sipahis were in the constant practice of making complaints to him of the conduct of their officers. The Jemidar Adjutant was one of his chief favourites. By his means the General learned every thing that passed in the regiment, and the Jemidar, having the General's ear, of course knew how to frame his reports to his own advantage. This

was a fine opportunity for him to revenge all the suspicion which the European Adjutant had evinced. I never heard exactly what he told or what he invented, but I know the General so threatened the Adjutant that he applied to the burra saib*—the great General of all the army, to inquire into his conduct, and after some time certain officers met together to examine into the matter according to their customs.

My master was a great friend to the European Adjutant, and they used to be writing together during the whole time the Court was sitting. The Jemidar was well informed of this, and he hated my master as much as he hated the Adjutant himself. One day when I was passing down the Lines, he called me into his house. He told me if I would be his friend, and let him know all that passed at my

* Great man : the Commander-in-chief is meant here.

master's, he would take care to reward me well. I heard him a long time in silence, for nothing can be more imprudent than to listen to promises of this sort, which seem to hold out great things, and generally are found to produce but very little. At length, when he saw that I was too wise to be caught in a net of that kind, he talked to me differently. He began by a present of ten rupees, which had the effect of opening my mouth immediately, and I told him as much as I thought this present worth. He asked me to visit him often, which I promised, and, as I saw that it would be profitable, I took care to perform my promise. Notwithstanding, however, all our united efforts—mine in giving intelligence, and his in acting on it—the end of the affair was, his being removed* to

* In every regiment of Native troops, the Jemidar Adjutant is a very confidential person. If it were possible to explain to an European reader how, in this case, strong resemblance may co-exist with unapproachable difference,

another regiment, which occasioned the loss of his appointment, and gave him the additional annoyance of a long journey. He obtained nevertheless two months leave to remain and arrange his affairs, and this interval he spent in contriving to revenge himself on my master, whom he considered even a greater enemy than the Adjutant.

Through my means the Jemidar was well acquainted with all my master's habits and pursuits. He knew his fondness for reading, and the many hours of each day during which he occupied himself in writing. A small room beyond the hall was the place where he a Jemidar might be described as holding a rank similar to that of Lieutenant. The Jemidar *Adjutant* is an officer of this grade possessing an appointment described by the name, by which he becomes the medium of communication between the English Adjutant, and the Native commissioned, non-commissioned, and privates; and his office renders him immediately subordinate to the English Adjutant, through whom alone he can officially communicate with the officer commanding the regiment.

generally sat when alone, and all his books and papers remained during the night on a table placed in the centre. Now the Jemidar felt, that all his wishes would be gratified, could he but effect the destruction of this table and its contents. I knew well that no loss would so sensibly afflict my master as this, and I was indeed glad that there was a prospect of his incurring it, since his service was altogether the most unprofitable in which I ever spent my time. Moreover, half he said to me was of the most offensive nature; he continued to aver that I knew nothing of the religion I professed,—that I was not a true follower of the Prophet, but had learned many of the abominations of the Hindoos. In my heart I detested him, but I was careful to conceal my hatred from the Jemidar. On the contrary, I affected great compunction at injuring so good a master, and protested over

and over again that nothing could bring me to consent to it. This of course obliged the Jemidar to increase his bribes and his promises, the former of which I took, and the latter laughed at. With great apparent difficulty I suffered myself to be prevailed on to aid a plot which we carried into execution in this manner.

My master's house was of pukka work ; it had been a cutcherry,* and was therefore exceedingly strong. Although we should have been very well satisfied to destroy the whole, it was of course out of our power. We were obliged therefore to content ourselves with attempting to effect the destruction of the papers. The house was large, and there were two principal entrances. These were on either side, and receded some feet beyond the main front, with which each was connected by a

* A Court-house ; often built bomb-proof.

semicircular veranda. The upper panels of the doors, for the sake of admitting the air, were venetians. Opposite one of them was the window of the room containing the papers, against which our efforts were directed. This window was likewise formed of venetians, and by its means we hoped to bring our plans to a successful issue.

It might be verging towards two o'clock in the night, as the Feringhees count their time, when the Jemidar accosted me in the veranda. In one hand he held a small chatty* nearly filled with burning charcoal; in the other he carried a bamboo of tolerable length, in one end of which was inserted a thinner bamboo wrapped in cloth saturated with oil. Without the exchange of a word we lighted the latter immediately. With great caution I opened the venetians, which I had been care-

* A name applied to vessels of all dimensions.

ful not to fasten previously to retiring to rest. We passed the bamboo through with the greatest care, and rested its extremity on the opposite window. We seated ourselves in patient expectation of the result, and we heard the crackling of the wood with a satisfaction unknown to those who have never rejoiced in the feelings of gratified revenge. Alas! we were not doomed now to enjoy its full measure. We found the bamboo was so short, that we could not, by any contrivance, make it reach the table, which stood farther from the window than I had calculated. We had hardly time to whisper our regret for the disappointment, when we heard sounds in my master's sleeping-room, which convinced me he was roused and alarmed. The Jemidar retreated instantly, and I flew to the hut in which I was supposed to pass my nights. Presently I heard the voice of my master calling aloud for "Shaik

Ismael," and I presented myself before him with as much expedition as was consistent with my being supposed asleep when he first called. He pointed out to me the window still in flames, and I discovered the mat that lay beneath it, burnt in two or three places. He secured the bamboo which still lay across the veranda, and proceeded to examine the outer side of the house attended by me. The first thing on which he stumbled, was the chatty of charcoal still burning, left by the Jemidar in the suddenness of his flight. I cursed his stupidity in my secret heart, but affected to be as curious as my master himself in examining the piece of cloth to which it was suspended. He bade me keep it carefully, as it might eventually lead to the discovery of the incendiary,—an injunction which I obeyed, as I soon found that there was not a single mark to distinguish it from any other chatty that ever was made.

All our search was in vain ; we found nothing more, and the fire being extinguished by plenty of water, we returned to our places of repose until the morning.

My master's first act was to write to the chief European magistrate of the place, to tell him the whole circumstance, and to refer him to me, who carried the letter, for farther explanation. The magistrate,—*Collector*, the Feringhees call him,—asked me many questions ; but as they related only to what I had seen when my master called me, of course I had no trouble in answering them. Moreover, I had not lived so long amongst Europeans to be ignorant of the manner in which the civilians generally treat the military, and I was pretty certain I ran no risk of being discovered. The Collector, to be sure, asked me if I knew of any native who had anger against my master, or was likely to injure him, but I declared my

ignorance in such a manner as apparently satisfied him. My master had applied for a peon,* whose presence he considered would be sufficient to secure his house from future attempts; but this was refused, on the plea that government did not allow enough for the public service, and that it was impossible to detach one on such an occasion. I laughed when I knew of the Collector's refusal, for I saw two peons every morning running by the side of the tonjon,† in which his infant, on the knee of the Ayah, was carried out to take the air. My master was as wise as I was, and I discerned the bitterness of his soul as he read the refusal. I took care to add to it by telling him how many servants in the establishment of the Collector were in reality paid by the Government,

* A police servant, wearing an official badge.

† A carriage, in shape like a small gig, but carried by bearers in the same manner as a palanquin.

under the denomination of Seebundees. Nothing gave me more pleasure than dissensions between these accursed infidels, and whenever an opportunity fell in my way, I was careful to promote or increase them. I knew that the military generally hated the civil servants of the Company, by whom, in turn, they were despised, and I rejoiced as I looked forward to the time, when the one party, having most strength on its side, would rise up against the other, and deprive them of their wealth and their privileges. Such a struggle is the crisis, when the faithful servants of the Prophet should rise to assert their right to a country, which their forefathers conquered at the point of the sword.

This was almost the only instance in which I was foiled in my purposes of vengeance, as my master's was the first service in which I found it next to impossible to gain any thing be-

yond the paltry wages he gave me monthly. Pretending, therefore, a wish to visit the country in which dwelt the children of my father's brother, I procured my discharge, and a character which could not fail to recommend me to some other officer. My master made me a present when I left him, and having collected all my property together, I proceeded to join my friend the Jemidar, who had advanced so far on his journey as the next village, where he was awaiting my arrival.

As soon as we reached our destination, I took up my dwelling with the Jemidar. In a short time I found that the Major of the regiment had discharged his butler, and without delay I went to offer my services. The Major looked at my characters, which I had carefully preserved from the first moment of my living with a Feringhee, and was satisfied with them. Being a man who spoke little, he engaged me without

any words, and I entered on my duties very well pleased with the appearance of my new master.

In a short time I found that every thing was under the control of a Moor woman, who stood so high in the Major's favour, that in fact she was absolute master of him, and of the whole house. I was a long time debating whether I should endeavour to set up an influence opposed to her's, or by bringing her over to desire my aid, add my efforts to her's, and be contented with a share in the pillage, which I soon saw she was carrying on to an extent that startled even me. After much deliberation, for I was too wise to resolve rashly, the latter course appeared to me the most prudent, and I entered on it immediately.

I soon found that the Moor woman was very anxious to discover how my master spent his time when absent from his own house; when

were his chief friends, and on what matters they principally conversed together. She knew no language but that of the Moors, and was very glad of the information my acquaintance with the Feringhee speech enabled me to give her. I was not long before I entirely gained her favour, and we agreed to share all the profits we were enabled to make under such favourable circumstances. I was sometimes, I must confess, startled at the violence which she showed to the Major when he displeased her ; and once or twice I ventured to counsel her on the matter ; but she proved to me that she was better acquainted with the art of managing him than I was. Really, when I look back on that part of my life, I cannot help being surprised that an European saïb, whose brother-officers all called him a brave man, should submit to the tyranny of a Moor woman so passively as he did. I do believe her furious

words and looks terrified him, and he was always glad to purchase her return to good-humour by a present of money, or of some joy, which pleased her and me quite as well.

At length I heard hints at the mess-table that the friends of the Major,—who were more clear-sighted regarding the real state of affairs, so far as concerned the Moor woman, for I was quite unsuspected,—were advising him, with all the persuasion they could use, to escape from the trammels in which he suffered himself to be held, by returning to his own country. Laul Bee's rage at the tidings exceeded all bounds, and my utmost influence was necessary to prevent her rushing to the Major's presence, and charging him with harbouring such a design. Shortly, however, my master himself began to throw out hints of such an intention, and to speak of the provision he would in that case make for her. The least glance at the subject

was always sufficient to bring on a tempest, and I began to fear, what did in effect happen, that my master would set off so suddenly, that I should not be able to warn her of his design.

For a few weeks he never alluded to his intention of returning home ; and even I, with all my anxious observation, was persuaded that he had abandoned it. He began instead to talk of taking a few days' march into the jungle, for the purpose of shooting tigers ; and several other officers, some of whom had elephants, were preparing to accompany him. I received orders to prepare everything necessary, and it was not until we had advanced three marches from the cantonment, that I discovered we were actually on our way to the Presidency, whence my master intended to embark, whilst one of his friends was to take charge of his house, and of all the property he had left behind him.

I cannot describe my consternation. All my sagacity did not avail me at this juncture. I was compelled to proceed on my unwilling journey, or to forfeit my wages, and the chance, nay, the certainty of receiving some present from my master previously to his embarkation. I submitted, therefore, to destiny, and we proceeded on our way as rapidly as possible, often making two marches on the same day, and halting nowhere. In vain I indulged the hope of being overtaken by some messenger, or perhaps by Laul Bee herself, in which case I had little doubt that my master would be prevailed on to return; for notwithstanding the violence of this woman, the influence she possessed over him was extraordinary. However, day after day passed, and our progress was not once interrupted. Without accident of any kind, we arrived at the Presidency, and my master engaged a pas-

sage in a ship about to sail in a very short time.

I knew that, long before this, Laul Bec was perfectly well acquainted with the real intention of our journey, and that either she had acquiesced patiently in the loss of her prey, or was now on the road in pursuit of him. Earnestly I desired that the latter might be her mode of proceeding; and I hailed every day that my master was compelled to remain, as adding to the chances of her arriving in time to prevent his departure. Alas! all my expectations were in vain. I was compelled to accompany the Major on board; and when the boat brought me back to the land, I stood on the shore, watching the ship as the wind blew it farther and farther away, and bemoaning the destiny which had deprived me of the surest means of wealth that had ever before fallen into my hands.

I prepared to return to the cantonment, and to see how much Laul Bee really possessed, before I took her to be my wife. I did not fear her temper, for I was too good a Musulmaun to hold women in such estimation as my infidel master had done; and I will engage, with the aid of a good bamboo, to keep the most refractory in subjection. All depended on the amount of her riches, and I had good hopes of finding it such as would form no contemptible addition to my own. The first two marches of my journey were accomplished without incident, but at the end of the third I met Laul Bee herself, in a palanquin, having got thus far on her way to reclaim her fugitive master.

How she cursed his beard!—what dirt she threw on him, when she found he was really beyond her reach! I did not escape her anger, and she vowed revenge on the folly which had

not prevented his departure. But how long does a woman's rage last? it is like a pishash,* which blows fiercely and is gone.

[Thus abruptly closes the MS. of Shaik Ismael. Whether death suddenly interrupted the progress of his confessions, or whether Laul Bee, under whose dominion he is known to have lived subsequently to this period, disapproved of his descendants' penetrating too deeply into the domestic annals of the founder of the family, and destroyed what must have formed the greater part of the *Reminiscences* of her husband, is a matter which may be decided according to the opinion of the reader, since complete ignorance is avowed by the Editor.]

* A violent but very transient whirlwind, so called by the natives; the word literally signifying *devil*.

ALICIA BROOKE.

THE bright rays of a full moon shone strongly on the surf, which was crowned with a thousand white crests, beneath the influence of as fine a breeze as ever brought vessel to port. The numerous tents on the esplanade stood out in picturesque array, and the inmates of many sat amongst their cordage enjoying the freshness and loveliness of the evening. It was long past the hour in which this spot is the mall of fashionable resort. The last lingering Parsee had quitted the beach ; the murmurs of devotion, and the hum of pleasure had ceased. The

sounds that disturbed the stillness of the night, were the voices of friends engaged in social converse, just distinguishable above the dashing of the waves as they rolled onwards to the shore.

Just without the door of one of these tents two young men were seated, at a point directly opening upon the sea. Both looked on that element, as it lay smilingly before them, with an interest which all have felt, who for months have trusted themselves to its perfidious bosom. There had been a pause of some duration, which was now broken by the younger of the two.

“She has a famous breeze into port to-night,” said he.

“Behold the Irish eagerness of De Renzy,” returned the other, laughing. “She may be some hundred knots from land yet, and he

is calculating on hearing her signal at this moment."

"She may have the benefit of the breeze at a hundred knots from shore, as well as at one," said De Renzy.

"So much arithmetic was not in the compass of thy thoughts," replied Brooke, and he continued in a sort of chant—

"The wind is fair, the sail is set,
And all thy soul is on the fret,
To greet upon this Indian shore,
A damsel, never seen before!"

"Extempore Brooke must have his jest, and he is welcome to such matter as I can furnish him withal," said De Renzy, with greater temper than those who knew him best, would have expected from him on such an occasion.

"Why, truly, my dear De Renzy, you afford very excellent matter at this present moment," returned Brooke. "There are about

nine million chances against your gaining access to this damsel for days, perhaps weeks, after her landing; and here are you, parading yourself amongst your intimates, in all your military coxcombry of scarlet and gold, to the great prejudice of your own comfort, and the increase of your tailor's *suffering*. Alas! De Renzy, after all, you have but the sorry chance of a subaltern."

"I presume Sir Ernald Brooke's career commenced in that rank," said De Renzy, colouring.

"Ah! says't thou? There is some boldness in him who sings to that tune, and De Renzy is of brave blood."

The very young man to whom this was addressed, looked full in the face of the speaker; but the admirable temper expressed there, checked the somewhat angry tide of his emotions.

“ If I *be* impatient, have not your descriptions been the cause of my offence?” said he.

“ Have you not raved of this fair cousin until half our heads are turned already? The introduction you have promised, will alone compensate for all the sleepless nights which you, and she, through you, have caused me.”

“ Most religiously shall I perform that promise,” returned Brooke. “ Taking you in my hand, I shall promenade myself—*ourselves*—into the General’s presence, and shall do the honours by you *thus*—‘ My respected uncle, since you are supposed very anxious to consign your charge to proper keeping, I have the pleasure of presenting to your notice a husband quite ready to relieve you of her. Be pleased to know Lieutenant De Renzy, of the 92nd; date of rank three months from this present time precisely, counting backwards. His prospects are most flattering; seventeen years of

farther subalternship, dignified at the end with the brevet of *Captain*, shining like the tinsel gewgaws on the extreme points of the tails of our coatees. Then, in the vista, the epaulettes of a Lieutenant-Colonel are to be seen, tempting him to toil towards their attainment during the next ten *lustres*.' There is a touch of the classics for you, De Renzy; I am sure you will be properly grateful for my announcement."

De Renzy smiled with perfect sincerity of kindness; but he did not answer. In truth there was food for more serious meditation in his mind, than his companion deemed.

De Renzy was very young,—scarcely past the age of boyhood. Of impetuous temper and sanguine temperament, possessing more than his nation's warmth of feeling—for he was an Irishman, gifted with strong imagination by nature, which had been heightened by the pursuits to which

he was addicted,—a far less glowing description of female beauty and excellence than Brooke had given of his cousin, would have been sufficient to have fired the train of his thoughts, and to enshrine her as the prototype of all that had been sung by the poets he so enthusiastically loved. Moreover, he had a much less vague idea of her personal attractions than Brooke himself suspected, for he had obtained a view of a portrait possessed by Brooke, which surely had never been exhibited by its owner, nor indeed its existence even alluded to. Brooke had his own particular reasons for this concealment, which De Renzy did not trouble himself to develope,—not even to conjecture. Perhaps if Brooke had consulted his discretion rather than his feelings, he would have made this fair cousin less frequently the theme of his conversations with De Renzy, notwithstanding the confidential terms on which they lived to-

gether. It is true that when he first received intelligence of the probability of his kinswoman's visiting the Indian shore, De Renzy had been present, and had witnessed his friend's irrepressible burst of ecstasy at the tidings. And yet after the first outbreak of that ecstasy, Brooke had found leisure for other feelings. It was to him incomprehensible that Sir Ernald Brooke, so distinguished in his own land—so blessed with ample means to adorn his rank by hospitality and such liberal economy as befitted it—so gifted with talent and so much the patron of literature, should consent to, an exile which promised him no additional distinction. The command he would assume on his arrival, was not the most pre-eminent in India, and Brooke, who was proud of his kinsman as the head of his house, hardly endured to think, that he must be subordinate to some so incalculably his inferiors. On the other hand,

Brooke craved the sight of his lovely cousin,—conscious nevertheless as he was that it would but be “sweet poison.” He had loved her with all the passion of first love, at the age when love seems to man the chief business of his existence; but he knew that love was not returned. He had felt the bitterness of watching the progress of his successful rival;—of seeing the tenderness he so coveted lavished on one whom Brooke,—no vain man withal—ventured to think immeasurably below his own poor deservings. He was then attached to a regiment in England, and had exchanged into the ——— Dragoons in the anguish of a wounded spirit, that longed to rush to the extremity of the earth to escape the scene of its sufferings. He had, since his arrival, daily expected to receive intelligence of the marriage which, he fancied, would be his death-wound, and in this state of suspense he heard that Sir Ernald and

his daughter were on the eve of embarkation for this remote land. His anxiety for the meeting was, therefore, of no ordinary kind, and his outward appearance of patience was only one proof more of the perfect self-command for which Brooke was distinguished, a distinction that in itself describes his intellect as far above mediocrity.

Considering the excitement of his own feelings, the boyish anticipations of De Renzy were sometimes sufficiently annoying; but he remembered that he was indebted for them to his own unusual indulgence of his emotions, and he was patient. Jestingly, but yet consistently, he endeavoured to set before his very young friend, the utter absurdity of the romantic visions with which his fancy was evidently teeming. He knew the very "form and bent" of the youth's mind, and, setting aside the other insurmountable obstacles that

intervened, he knew the pride of his uncle's character—his high hopes for his only child, too well to dream that he would bestow her on the undistinguished De Renzy. Indeed Brooke sometimes smiled at the egregious folly of such an attempt on the part of the boy, and felt firmly convinced that the very first appearance of Sir Ernald would put to flight the phantasms that were floating through his brain. That the high-souled Alicia Brooke could ever be brought to consider the frolic and enthusiasm and poetry of De Renzy as other than the amusement of an idle hour, or at best the dawn that promised a brighter day, never occurred to his imagination. He laughed at him as a rival; he knew that he might as well "love some bright particular star and think to wed it." But he was persevering in his efforts to impress De Renzy himself with a conviction of the ridicule that must attach to

his entertaining serious hopes, *if* he did entertain them. And sometimes, when Brooke reflected on the want of occupation which marks the ordinary routine of Indian existence, the incessant craving of De Renzy after some object with which to occupy himself,—round which to gather all the hitherto vagrant efforts of his genius,—something that should be at once his theme and his inspiration, he feared it was no very improbable supposition, that he hugged himself in the belief of finding in Alicia Brooke, as *he* would have expressed it, “the dove of peace and promise to his ark.”

When Brooke quitted the presence of Sir Ernald and Alicia, after their first interview he seemed to himself as one walking in a dream. He felt that he had been conversing with those on whom some terrible calamity had fallen, but the nature of it was to him a mystery. Why Lady Brooke, the young step-

mother of Alicia, had not accompanied her husband, he had inquired ; but he found, on reflection, that his questions had constantly been evaded. Both Sir Brooke and his daughter possessed, in a pre-eminent degree, the power of drawing the minds of their associates from a topic they disliked, and the charm of conversing in such a manner as to occupy entirely the thoughts of their guests with such subjects as they chose. The purity of Alicia's complexion, which had always been amongst the greatest of her personal attractions, was now indeed stainless ; not one tint of the rose lay on her cheek ; all was of marble whiteness. The composure of her countenance had assumed even a higher character than formerly, for it was touched with a resignation, in which there was all of submission,—nothing of hope. The lustre of her large eye was not less bright ; but its lid was more downcast, and her attire,

always remarkable for its simplicity, was now severely plain. She had still a smile for those around her, but it was the beam of charity, not of happiness; and Brooke felt in his inmost heart, that in some shape or other, a deadly blight had fallen on the youth of his most beloved cousin.

Sir Ernald was one of those on whom it is impossible to look without attention,—a face and figure never forgotten. But now Brooke detected a sterner haughtiness in the grandeur of his expressive countenance. He seemed as if he had put all earthly vanities away from him, and trampled on the honours of the world as baubles unworthy of his thought. His eyes were intensely dark, the brows black and rigid. He looked a being above the companionship of his species, and it was difficult to consider him as belonging to the same class of human existence as the ephemera that surrounded him. As

Brooke looked upon him, he remembered how that magnificent countenance had been softened by the smile of benevolence ; how that stern eye had glittered with the beam of affection. It had always seemed to him, that a man so stamped by nature must fulfil a great destiny. And what had been the destiny of Sir Ernald ? Alas, the veil with which the higher efforts of existence dazzle the imagination, loses its splendour, when the eye penetrates the recesses of domestic privacy ! The glitter of the drapery conceals the unutterable deformity that lurks beneath ; the hero of public life not unfrequently carries in his bosom the worm whose gnawing is unappeasable.

Awe-struck as De Renzy was on his first introduction to this extraordinary father and daughter, habit produced its invariable effect ; once accustomed to them, they became less imposing. At the end of a month, he

found himself conversing almost familiarly with them, and Brooke sometimes trembled as he saw his careless friend touching on themes which he himself had learned to shrink from in that presence. He had brought himself to inquire playfully of Alicia, how she had endured to part with *Willoughby*; and the pang that wrung her heart, was manifest in every beautiful feature. "Speak of him no more," she whispered; "least of all, to Sir Ernald. His very existence is—Oh, Brooke!—a curse and a shame to us. My cousin,—your uncle's wife has—dishonoured him!" Alicia said no more; she rushed from the apartment, and Brooke saw at once what had been the terrible cause which had driven these noble fellow sufferers to exile. The wife and the betrothed had shared one common guilt.

One evening the General was sitting with his daughter and the two friends in his veranda.

The summer softness of the air seemed to have soothed the whole party into gentleness, as they looked out upon the glories of the glowing sunset, illuminating the fair world that lay all tranquil and lovely beneath the arch of heaven as if sin had never marred it,—a meet habitation for the holy and the blest. They were all silent,—each occupied by feelings to which the tongue can give no utterance. At length De Renzy, whose youthful impetuosity could never be tamed to an endurance of a quiescent state of being, began a rambling harangue on the meetness of this season for the indulgence of all the gentler passions, and finally settled into a glowing dissertation on the blessings *love* bestowed on mankind.

The General started from his reverie, and looked on him almost sternly. “Young man, do you call love one of the gentler passions?” he asked.

Alicia trembled; she saw that her father's meditations had been on what he had suffered, and that he was approaching the point where he lost his self-government. "My father!" she said, and laid her hand on his arm.

"Yes, my Alicia, it is a gentle passion, is it not? The good youth said well," he continued bitterly: "and yet you and I, my child, have known fair blossoms plucked and cast away, ere now, under this guise of seeming love—have we not?" He paused; but Alicia knew his mood, and she signed to De Renzy to leave them. He obeyed; for the boy was startled at the storm he had provoked; and Brooke alone remained with the father and daughter.

"There needed not his departure," resumed the General, with a calmness more terrible than his previous emotion. "Our story is one too little common not to travel through the

world. *He*, amongst the rest, must know that on this dishonoured breast a seeming angel once slept; that one, all devil, lured her thence, a curse equally to the father and his only child! Surely she had motives for watchfulness, that should have kept the sword flaming always before his eyes, compelling him to withdraw his foot from the hallowed precincts. She threw a stain on my name! she trampled on my honour! she crushed my child! my only child! saving herself, the single dear passion of my soul; and yet, Alicia, thou wouldst teach me to *forgive!*"

The beautiful eyes of Alicia were fixed on the bright heaven above: "It is commanded, my father!"

"*I will forgive—let her die!* Her breath pollutes the common air. If the burning brand of guilt have not caused every purer feeling to perish; if one remembrance, one thought,

one aspiration, after days of innocence, find entrance into her bosom, she *cannot* live. Live and fallen ! live the abject scorn of every fool, and coward, and villain ! No ; let her die ! Let her seek mercy from her God in heaven ; man has none to offer her on earth."

" Shall man presume to be more just than God ?" said Alicia, pleadingly.

And Brooke, roused to strong emotion, spoke :

" Can *we*, men, whose pathway is strewed with ruin and desolation, refuse pardon to our fellow-sinner, because she is *woman* ?" said he. " Alas ! why is it that we teach ourselves there is one code for *her*, another for *us* ; that we claim impunity on the score of frequent sinning ! whilst in *her*, a single lapse is sufficient to darken a life, the previous part all purity, the latter all penitence. Do not think I plead for guilt ; let the punishment fall equally

on both offenders. The victim being condemned, what should be the sentence of the seducer?"

The malison of the outraged husband, the insulted father, was too deep for human voice or human language. It lay in the abysses of his half-broken heart, to be unrolled in that inexorable moment which is the separating boundary between time and eternity.

This memorable conversation was the only one in which Brooke heard either the father or daughter allude to the terrible trial they had endured. Whatever might be the depths of their grief, they bore it silently, and their general manner seemed to indicate that they even resisted it. But Brooke watched the pallid cheek of Alicia with too anxious an interest to hope that she was escaping its pressure. He dreaded that it was immitigable, and he confessed, in the secret of his

own heart, that to have seen her the wife of his once envied rival, would have been far less painful than seeing her thus.

Meanwhile, De Renzy sought every means of gaining access to the house of Sir Ernald. The General, attached to his nephew, extended to his friend a warmer welcome than his own pretensions would otherwise have obtained; and his visits were more frequent than their relative rank could, perhaps, have justified. Alicia, amused by his vivacity, and admiring his real talents, listened to him with an interest that unfortunately tended to encourage the passion the youth was nourishing. To her mind, the mere idea of his ever entertaining one serious thought of ultimate union with her, would have been so unutterably absurd, that hardly his own explicit declaration would have won her belief of it. But Brooke knew the character of De Renzy

too well to doubt the strength and reality of the passion he had imbibed ; and he feared that it could not exist so vividly without hope. He wished that Alicia's manner were less kind, less condescending ; but checked by the consciousness of his own attachment, he had not courage to open her eyes to the nature of his friend's feelings. He did not suspect that De Renzy's penetration, sharpened by that jealousy which "springs up with love as naturally as the tares amongst wheat," had detected the precise nature of his own affection for his cousin. He did not dream that the friendship of the boy was rapidly changing to distrust and hatred ; that he watched the intimacy subsisting between himself and Alicia with feelings almost vindictive ; — until the cloud burst, he had no idea that it was darkening the atmosphere.

They sat again in the tent on the esplanade,

and again the night was beauteous under the influence of the Indian moon. But "a change had come over the spirit of their dream." There was no longer the air of fraternal friendship which had once marked their intercourse; their words were few and cold, without perhaps either having a design of evincing that the spirit which had once been one of more than peace between them, had fled. Each felt the irksomeness of the constraint, and the impetuosity of De Renzy did not long brook it.

"I fancied," he began, attempting an air of badinage, "that I should have been the confidante of all your love-affairs, Brooke. Indeed, to own the truth, I expected my aid would not have been disdained in the way of 'penning a sonnet to your mistress' eyebrow,' or to the 'shadow of her shoe-tie.' Now, you see, I, in the openness of my foolish youth, have raved somewhat indiscreetly before you of

sundry visions which have dazzled my distempered brain, of a nymph *resembling* Alicia Brooke, and I have acted the part of a general who conveys to his enemy the very form of the attack he intends to make."

"You are jesting, De Renzy, and I will not be irritated at your raillery," said Brooke, composedly.

"Oh no, surely not. Why *you* should be shouting pæans of victory, man, and exult in your triumph over the heart a certain foolish youth of your acquaintance had hugged himself into the hope of possessing. To be sure, Brooke, there are people in the world who might have thought it no unseemly course in you to warn that said foolish youth, that *you* had already wooed and won."

"If I had so said, I had spoken untruly," replied Brooke composedly.

"Tush, man! why, boy as I am, I know it

is part of the lover's creed to deny, and swear 'by yea and nay,' in maidenly modesty, that he is altogether innocent in the matter. However, no man needs blush to be the lover of Alicia Brooke: scorned as I am, I am proud even in defeat."

"You speak truly," returned Brooke. "To love Alicia even hopelessly, is not beneath the proudest man living."

"And yet, Brooke, the successful lover denies his triumph!" said De Renzy, his lip curling scornfully as he spoke.

"I have already told you, that triumph exists only in your own fancy," returned Brooke.

"And if an angel from heaven," retorted De Renzy eagerly, "if an angel from heaven said it, I would tell him he —."

"Stay," said Brooke, laying his hand on the arm of the fiery young man; "pause for an

instant. These are words which I must not hear, as there are insinuations which I must not bear: if you have any thing against me, De Renzy, speak out manfully, and manfully will I reply to your charge. This skirmishing is mere boy's sport, and unworthy both of us."

"Most unworthy of Brooke the successful, perhaps," said De Renzy, more outrageous in proportion as he observed the calmness of his rival, "but if boyish, the more meet for the idiot who has been your dupe, when he deemed himself your friend. Yes, if there be one guise fouler than another in which treachery can stalk abroad upon this earth, it is when it assumes the shape which—Brooke wore!"

"You are mad," said Brooke rising. "Tomorrow when you are more yourself,—more disposed to listen to plain truths, and to awake from the delusions under which you are now

acting, let us meet again. But for the present we part. The name of Alicia Brooke,—let her love be given to whom it may,—is all too sacred to mingle with a midnight brawl.”

De Renzy rose also, and arrested the departure of Brooke. “By the heaven above us, I will not be thus trampled on,” he cried, in the madness of anger. “Let us bring our claims to an issue. The spot is private—the hour secure—here are pistols, and let our signal be—*death or Alicia!*”

“The alternative is not exactly a matter of course,” said Brooke, putting him aside. “It may be *life*, yet not Alicia for either you or me. For the present, De Renzy, this matter *must* rest. If I were base enough to take advantage of your present rashness, believe me the morrow would hardly exist for you.”

“Cold, dissembling hypocrite!” exclaimed De Renzy, seizing the pistols which lay on

the table; "take your choice, and save me from becoming an assassin."

Once and again Brooke endeavoured to put the pistols aside; but the unfortunate young man, resolute in his fatal purpose, submitted neither to resistance nor expostulation, and Brooke, himself exasperated at the invectives showered on him, had extended his hand to receive the weapon of death, when the unhappy De Renzy, either by a sudden motion, or under the influence of the insanity which had throughout seemed to possess him, pulled the trigger, and fell a corpse at the feet of Brooke.

* * * * *

We are not writing a romance; we are giving a faithful picture of the stern realities of life. It boots not to enlarge on the feelings of Brooke, guiltless as he was of any

participation in the exasperation of his unhappy friend. It was sufficient for him to know that the brave, the gifted, had fallen untimely and obscurely, and that the sun which had risen in brightness, had set under the murkiest clouds. And indeed, Brooke's mind was greatly occupied by the position in which he himself stood. The rigours of the law must take their course ; and Brooke was compelled publicly to exonerate himself from any participation in the fatality which he would gladly have prevented even at the sacrifice of his own life. The investigation terminated, as in justice it must have done, in his complete exoneration ; but Brooke, reflecting on the thousand fine threads which compose the web of destiny, found that he had abundant cause for repentance and remorse.

Amidst all his grief, he religiously kept from the knowledge of his kinswoman the unfortu-

nate attachment to herself which had led to this fatal consummation. Keenly sensitive in all that concerned her, he had carefully withholden her name from public discussion ; and the cause of the melancholy disaster remained unknown. Alicia hardly needed this addition to the sorrows which encompassed her. She had already endured the sharpest wound that can be inflicted on the heart of woman, the desertion of her first love ; and that desertion, too, attended by circumstances of almost unparalleled aggravation. She had witnessed the dishonour cast upon her father towards the close of his distinguished career ; and had lived to hear scorn and derision attached to that name, which to her was synonymous with all that is most elevated in human nature. And now, the last drop in the cup of bitterness, she was his companion in exile from " her own, her native land," cast amongst

people whose minds were, for the greater part, incapable of participation with her's, and compelled to endure the artificial routine of an existence which, when the first novelty had subsided, offered nothing to interest her. Of an ardent and enquiring spirit, a warm lover of the human race, and benevolently anxious for the amelioration of the condition of all those who were depressed in the scale of society,—she, in common with a few who have commenced an Indian career, had indulged in speculations on the possible good she might do during her residence in the East. How vain were such speculations! Excluded by the arbitrary customs of her own countrymen, as well as by the prejudices of those in whose behalf she had dreamt of using her exertions, almost from any knowledge of the natives of this land, she found her days glide away in one monotonous course, unrelieved by a single

act of benevolence beyond the common charity of alms-giving. Above all, she found herself companionless. More and more embittered by the remembrance of the injuries inflicted on him, and engrossed by his own reflections, the intercourse between herself and her father was gradually assuming a less confidential, and, of course, a gloomier character. A rigid observer of etiquette, and minutely sensible of all his position required, the General insisted on receiving daily at his table a certain number of guests, and of being accessible to the herd of idlers who seek to while away the heaviness of existence by making those large demands on the time and patience of others, known by the name of morning-calls. It is not to be supposed that the intellect of every individual member of a large society was below mediocrity. Alicia rejoiced often to hail the oasis in the desert, regretting

only the peculiar bent of mind which naturally obscures the perceptions of people condemned perpetually to contemplate their species, and human life in general, from one point of view. She had no prejudices in common with theirs. She was amongst them as the sojourner of a day, whose tent was pitched there by accident, and who considered every hour she was compelled to remain, a sacrifice. And where could the high-souled Alicia Brooke find a female friend? Amongst those who offer themselves in the Indian market on a matrimonial speculation? or those educated in all the darkness characteristic of the schools for European culture, which add folly and vanity to ignorance? And how very few were those of the third class whom adverse circumstances had led there! All around her she heard the voice of levity, and she who had been scourged by the things of time into fixing

most of her hopes on eternity, felt it not the least poignant of her sufferings, that she was amongst those who, for the greater part, have forgotten that there are such things as death and futurity, or make them the themes for impious scoffing, and irreverent doubts of their existence.

As to Brooke, it was long before he could bring himself to resume his familiar visits at the house of Sir Ernald. There was so much there to bring back De Renzy to his mind, that the pain more than counterbalanced the bliss conferred by the mere presence of Alicia. The charm of her voice acted indeed as balm to his wounded spirit; but he was too clear-minded not to be aware that his love was hopeless. He saw that the passion had been exhausted in the heart of his cousin; he understood the mingled loftiness and enthusiasm of character which preserved her from the possi-

bility of a second attachment, and he saw that her affections had found a resting-place in her devotedness to her father. Sir Ernald, indeed, began daily to exact more and more of her care. Secretly disappointed in the career on which he had so lately entered, he sighed over the common-place trifles which constitute Indian existence, and in the secrecy of his heart brought himself to severe judgment for having quitted the noble arena of British life. He might have distinguished himself in the senate of his country,—he might have participated in the cares of her government,—he might have acquired a name in her literature,—and he reproached himself with moral cowardice in shrinking from the scoffs of the vulgar, or the taunts of the illiberal. He looked also on his only child, and he felt that he had shut her out from all those lofty prospects to which he had once aspired in her behalf. He did not wish

to see her wedded even to the highest amongst Indian officials, for he had looked into their existence, and found that its emptiness could afford nothing to occupy the highly-gifted Alicia. Occasionally he indulged a resolution of resigning his appointment, and returning to his native land; but he shrank, as many a masculine mind has done, from encountering the ridicule which he believed would attend his inconsistency. He endured, therefore, in silence, but that endurance gradually acquired a gloomier character; and even the mind of Alicia, resolutely as she had averted her eyes from the fatal truth, was compelled to admit, that there were occasional indications of aberration of intellect.

At length, however, it became necessary that Alicia should resolve on some decisive measure. It was evident, that the unfortunate Sir Ernald could no longer fulfil the duties his position

demanded, and, painful as it was, she pointed out to Brooke the circumstances in which they stood. For one moment his heart suggested to him to avow his love now, and to secure to Alicia on her voyage home a lawful protector ; but nobler thoughts repelled him. He knew that she would not have permitted her attachment even to the lover of her youth, to share her deep devotion to her father ; and how could he venture to call her thoughts to a connexion which must necessarily divert her mind from the sacred object which now engrossed her ? Silently, therefore, he assisted her in preparing for her voyage, and as silently he made his own preparations to accompany her. Until Alicia with her father was on board, she knew not that her cousin was near to share her painful task, and soothe the anguish which was the more keen because its cause was religiously concealed.

Alicia endured not that vulgar eyes should penetrate the nature of her father's malady. Herself his constant attendant, her filial affection rendered her assiduous in averting the observation of strangers. In vain Brooke pleaded to be allowed to share her cares equally ; she hardly endured that he should witness the complete wreck of that intellect which had once been so pre-eminent,—so commanding. Unmindful that her own health was sinking beneath the weight of the task she had undertaken, she persevered without shrinking, until Sir Ernald rested once more in the hall of his fathers.

Year after year that noble daughter watched over the imbecile old age of her parent,—bore with his infirmities,—soothed his waywardness, and supported his weakness. It was not until every trait of youth had vanished from Alicia, that she received his last sigh, and felt that *his*

age had been more blessed than her's, for *she* must die desolate and alone !

It was but for a little that her mind bowed beneath the pressure of this thought. Alicia Brooke had been sustained beneath all her trials by a hope higher than this world, and she was still so sustained. She endured patiently her solitary life, and sought cheerfulness in the exercise of constant benevolence. As to Brooke—the faithful lover still,—she had long been the confidante of his undeviating attachment, and she rewarded it by the firmest friendship. “ If love were not ridiculous at my age,” she said, “ believe me I am otherwise incapable of it. My heart has literally worn the passion out ; and if you persevere in rejecting all others for me, we must be content, my dear cousin, to cheer our age by occasionally meeting in this world, and looking forward to a brighter existence in that to come.”

And Alicia kept her word. She died, as she had lived,—pure as the unsunned snow; and Brooke, who survived her a few years, caused to be engraved on a cenotaph, placed in her favourite lime-tree walk, the expressive text of Scripture,—“ Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all !”

HOSSAIN'S ADVENTURE.

THE latter rains had ceased to fall on the earth. The brilliant sun had proceeded another month onwards on his immemorial career, and had dispersed the noisome vapours that exhale from decaying vegetation. Health and happiness seemed to fill the glorious world of India, and Hoossain prepared for his journey homewards. He had lingered long amongst his relatives, first because the monsoon had set in with unusual severity, and his path lay through the jungle, and secondly because he had been promised a companion for his journey

who would have taken away half its toilsomeness. Unfortunately, as far as regarded the latter, his expectation was vain. The fellow-traveller he had hoped for, was seized with fever, the pestilence which rages just at the close of the monsoon, and died.

Hoossain was more than afflicted, he was terrified at this stroke. As a Mussulmaun he hailed it as a most inauspicious omen of the prosperity of his journey, and as a friend he felt the loss of his companion keenly. However, he betook himself to the consolation of the fatalist—that passive submission to the decrees of destiny which distinguishes all of his sect. Convinced that no effort of his own could avail to escape the danger appointed for him, he shook off his fears, and prepared to proceed homewards alone.

Moreover, Hoossain was not without that second particular motive which so often in-

fluences the actions of human beings. He was of the humblest class of society, and he enjoyed its privileges. He was not affianced to an unknown and unseen bride. His betrothed was the maiden his youthful fancy had chosen and his heart selected as its first-love. They had met for months beneath the shade of the mango-grove, and had breathed their vows of affection in the presence only of the unseen spirits that haunt the air. Still, uncultured as they were, it was a pure and holy affection, untouched by a thought that partook of sinfulness, unsullied by an action that could bring shame.

And all his long absence from Khataja, (so was his affianced wife called,) he had kept his heart from one wandering thought. If he dreamed of the paradise promised him by his Prophet, the houri destined for him assumed the form of his beloved. Whatever were his

visions, whether of the happiness of this world, or the glories of that to come, the figure of Khataja mingled with them as the prominent blessing promised ; and if ever Mussulmaun loved with purity and sincerity, Hoossain was that man.

The day waned, and as the night advanced Hoossain bade farewell to his friends, and commenced his journey. It might be towards three o'clock in the morning as the Europeans reckon their time, when he quitted the cottage of his father's brother, and turned his steps towards the jungle. Very few of the villagers were stirring, and those few were awake only on his account, sitting by torch-light in the shadow of their door-porches, waiting to say *farewell*. Hoossain felt very melancholy as he passed through the narrow, and, it must be confessed, dirty street, that composed the principal thoroughfare of the village. I almost

suspect that he was guilty of sundry sentimental soliloquies over every puddle that rendered his progress tedious, and I fancy he stopped to caress, or if not, at least to speak a word of parting kindness to every particular pig that ran athwart his path, abhorred as this unclean animal is by the faithful. However, these peccadilloes lay between Hoossain and his conscience, as it is certain that no eyes were upon his actions, at that juncture, to bear witness against him.

Well, the village was at length lost sight of, not a straggling pig or pariah-dog greeted him with a grunt or a bark. He turned to look backwards, and although, by the dawning of the sun upon the eastern horizon, he knew that the fires for cooking were kindling in the abodes he had left, he could not discern one cloud of smoke to dim the clearness of the atmosphere that surrounded him. Thereupon

he heaved sundry sighs over the conviction, that he had indeed quitted the abodes of those most nearly connected with him by the ties of blood, and began to cherish certain hopeful anticipations of the meeting which was presently to ensue between him and her who was attached to him only by the ties of affection. Thus it is, that hopes connected with the future for ever mingle with our regrets for the past, teaching us, if we would learn it, the wholesome lesson, that, as all that is brightest must end in decay, so all that is connected with mortality teems with new life, and that dissolution itself is but the earnest of a brighter and better existence.

Hoossain's road lay, during the whole of the first day, through an open and well-cultivated country. Minds that feel their existence principally by sensation, are naturally very much affected by external objects. Hoossain's

vivacity rose far above the temperate pitch, and when the height of the sun warned him to seek shelter, he betook himself to the shade afforded by a small deserted pagoda, in a mood of mind which the most enlightened might possibly envy.

The next morning he rose at least two hours before the sun, and not delaying to partake of any refreshment, sprang forwards at once on his journey. The stars overhead shone as brightly as if they rejoiced with him in his progress, and the moon as she sank towards the western horizon, seemed to linger reluctantly on the world's threshold: at least so thought Hoossain, and he pleased himself with fancies of a similar nature, all cheerful as the prospect of approaching day. Just as the first streak of dawn blushed in the sky, he reached the jungle, and bounding on with a gay heart, he watched the increasing daylight

as it peered through the branches of the trees that began to grow thicker every step he advanced.

The sun was well up in the heavens when he heard a feeble cry of distress. Hoossain's progress was instantly stayed, for his thoughts just then were resting on the bride who was so impatiently expecting his return, and the wail which smote his ear was evidently uttered by a female. Now Hoossain was too well acquainted with the domestic discipline enforced by the husbands amongst his countrymen, to be particularly surprised on this occasion, but his heart was unusually softened by the remembrance of his dear Khataja. He did not hold women generally in high estimation, because it is not the custom of his caste to do so; but at this juncture the youth was in love, and by some inexplicable process, he extended his tenderness to all who, either in sex, age, or

circumstance, bore the smallest resemblance to the object of that love.

Whilst he was considering which way to turn his steps, the cry was repeated, and he perceived that he must penetrate the jungle to afford the aid he meditated. Now Hoossain had a very wholesome horror of tigers, serpents, and the whole array of formidable animals and noxious reptiles which generally make such leafy labyrinths, as those which sprang up on either side of him, their covert. He almost doubted whether his more prudent plan would not lead him onwards, whilst he left his neighbour to find succour elsewhere. Luckily for the credit of his humanity, a repetition of the wail,—a prolonged cry,—smote his ear, and he plunged at once into the forest.

Of course the jungle became denser in proportion as he penetrated into its depth. His

progress, therefore, was slow and occasionally painful. Sometimes he fell against a decayed stump of a tree, sometimes a projecting branch wounded his foot or his hand. To these disagreeables were added the fears of serpents and tigers, which, not without reason, tormented him. Every bush by which he passed, might be the haunt of some ferocious animal, every foot-step might press upon, and rouse, some noxious reptile. Moreover, the cry was not repeated. He had followed the direction of the sound thus far without finding traces of any human being, and he began to think within himself that his senses had deceived him, and that he was throwing away his time and his trouble. So he paused, and cast a wistful look behind him, wishing within himself that he had not been induced to quit the beaten track where his progress had been so pleasant, and, in comparison with his present situation, so secure. He

looked on all sides to see whether there was any means of retreating by a more promising path than that by which he had advanced. Alas ! the jungle was everywhere equally appalling, and Hoossain began to be assailed by the dread of missing his way, if he attempted to return. Almost overcome by this gloomy apprehension, he leaned against one of the tall bamboo-trees of which the greater part of the jungle was composed, and gave way to all the bitterness of his sorrow.

It is impossible to say how long Hoossain would have remained in the desponding position he had assumed, if his ears had not again caught the cry which had first induced him to swerve from his straightforward journey. It was the same sound ; there was no mistaking it, shrill as coming from a woman, and broken as from an *old* woman ; but it was much nearer, evidently but a few yards distant, and

the direction lay on his left hand. Hoossain bestirred himself once again, glad even to catch the echo of a human voice in that dismal solitude. He cared no longer for the impediments which delayed his progress, convinced that he was within reach of the object which had first induced him to encounter them, and not without the benevolent hope of lending a helping hand to some fellow-creature in distress.

This time his search was successful. Not fifty paces from the tree against which he had been leaning, he found himself on a small clear plain, hardly a hundred yards in circumference, surrounded by jungle, which, as he looked around, seemed to him absolutely impenetrable, in spite of his own experience. Three huts stood in the centre, and at the door of one sat an aged woman, piling dead leaves on a fire already so high and blazing, as to threaten the dry thatch of the hut behind. Hoossain saw

by the terror still expressed in her countenance, that the calls for succour had proceeded from her. Her eyes were so intently fixed on some object which evidently lay on the ground, that she did not see there was a stranger near her.

Curious in watching her motions, and anxious to discover what was her occupation before he accosted her, Hoossain's eyes followed the direction of her's, and rested on a huge cobra, whose head, surrounded with its formidable hood, spread out by the fury of the dreadful reptile to its full extent, was fiercely erected, and plainly indicated that the woman was preserved from his dangerous attack only by the fire, behind which she had contrived to ensconce herself.

Now, with regard to an open danger of this kind, our friend Hoossain was as brave of heart as he was strong of limb. Without a

word, he bounded forwards, and with one stroke of his bamboo destroyed the terrible serpent. The moment which rid the old woman of her fearful enemy, was that in which she became aware of the presence of her protector. She sat still, gazing on both, until Hoossain by two or three blows had convinced himself that the cobra was really dead :—then he turned to the woman.

“ Mother,” said he, “ I am a traveller, and have a long journey before me. I was getting on as fast as may be, when your cry brought me here, where I find what I least expected, houses and inhabitants, for I conclude you do not live here alone ?”

“ You say right, my son,” returned the old woman. “ My people are gone out about their business, and I have been exposed to the danger you see. I do not know how long I should have been able to keep up the fire, for fear was

taking away my strength. I cannot tell why I cried out, for none of my people will return to-night, and I had no reason to expect a traveller to turn out of his way in such a jungle as this. However, my son, you have been my friend in need, and old and helpless as I seem, I may be able to keep you from harm as deadly as that of the cobra's bite. Now come into the hut and refresh yourself, for you look wearied, and as if you would be glad of sleep."

"Mother," said Hoossain, "I will enter your house, though I cannot understand why any honest people could chose to live in a place like this; yet I will nevertheless trust you, for I cannot believe you would do any harm to one who meant to render you all the assistance in his power. Moreover, I put my trust in the Prophet, and wait my appointed day with patience."

"If I do you wrong, may your hand be on

my garment at the day of judgment !” returned the old woman. “ On the contrary, I mean to do you the best service I can, and if you attend to my advice, you will find no reason to regret that you gave both time and trouble for my sake this day. However, without more words let us go into the house ; or, if you choose it, I will spread a mat for you under the shade of this tree, and you can sleep whilst I prepare you a curry ; and, praised be Allah ! few, my son, will be able to offer you one more savoury.”

Hoossain, who, to confess the truth, was both tired and hungry, saw no reason why he should reject a proposal which offered him rest and refreshment. Relying on the important service he had rendered the old woman, he did not hesitate to trust himself to her, being happily at that age which finds it hard to believe that the greatest benefits are often repaid with

the severest injuries, and that a benefactor not unfrequently meets with the treatment of an enemy. Therefore, when the old woman had spread out the mat on which he was to sleep, he laid aside his bamboo, and threw himself fearlessly on the ground, happy to have achieved any good towards his fellow-creatures, and fearless as to its results.

The sun was actually declining, when our friend Hoossain awoke from his slumber, and he could scarcely bring himself to believe that he had spent the first day of this his march through the jungle so unprofitably,—as far as regarded his journey homewards. He looked around him, and saw nothing but the dense leaves of the forest, and he rubbed his eyes repeatedly, as if to assure himself that he was well awake. The sight of the old woman watching by his side, recalled to him all the circumstances which had preceded his slumber, and at the

same time reminded him that he was very hungry, and quite ready for the repast she had promised.

“ You have slept well, my son,” said she, perceiving he was really awake. “ Up now, and eat ; the sun is fast declining, and if you follow my advice, you have yet a good journey to make before midnight.”

“ It will take small pains to persuade me to that, mother,” replied Hoossain ; “ the longer the journey to-day, the shorter to-morrow ; the faster I walk, the sooner shall I be at the end of it. However, to tell the truth, I am just now so hungry, that if you have prepared the curry you promised me, I am very well inclined to do justice to your cookery.”

“ No more words, my son,” said the old woman, rising ; “ here it is, eat like a man who has got hard work before him.”

Hoossain obeyed both injunctions ; he made no reply, and he thrust a handful of rice into his mouth, as if bent on devouring all that was set before him. The curry, too, was enough to rouse the appetite even of a man who had already dined, and Hoossain did it, as he promised, ample justice.

“ May this day be propitious to thee !” said the old woman when he had well finished. “ There is no fault to be found with your appetite, my son. Now taste this sherbet ; I have been thought to make it well, and I have plenty of practice here. Yes, you may look at my rags, and at our poor huts, but the best kernel is often in the smallest nut. Now your jacket is whole and clean, and I will wager nevertheless that my clothing is worth the most.”

Hoossain instinctively put his hand to his cummerbund, in the folds of which he had

secured the bag containing his money ; a large sum, too, for a gardener, for it was his share of the legacy left by his father, the receiving of which had been in fact the object of his journey. He felt again and again ; examined every wrinkle of the cloth ; all in vain ; the bag was gone !

Poor Hoossain rose hastily, like a man who tries to shake off the impression of an unpleasant dream. He looked all about the spot where he had slept and eaten : nothing was to be seen. He was quite sure he had not lost his treasure in the jungle ; he was too well satisfied of the carefulness with which he had secured it, to believe that possible. He felt certain that he had been robbed, and of course he decided instantly that the old woman was the thief, or at least some accomplice who had not yet made his appearance.

“ Wretched old hag ! ” exclaimed the dis-

console traveller ; “ I came so far out of my way to render you a service, and to save your life, which you repay by robbing me of all that is to make mine happy ! Cursed be this day ! and mischief take the bamboo which killed the cobra, that was a thousand times less venomous than you ! ”

“ Fair and softly, son ! ” returned the old woman, no ways moved by his anger ; “ good words cost nothing. Did I not tell you my rags covered more than your clothes ? You found nothing, whilst I, you see, can find this ! ” and putting her hand into the faded sari that was wrapped round her, she produced the identical purse which Hoossain had lost.

Hoossain was bewildered. He could not tell what the old woman meant by robbing him and then showing him his property. He began to suspect, that her people were close

at hand, and that it was time for him to prepare for the worst. Hoossain felt, it must be confessed, somewhat sorrowful, as he contemplated the probability that his career would shortly close. Life has charms even for those who have lived longest and suffered most; to the young and tolerably happy, therefore, the prospect of quitting it so suddenly as the youth thought himself about to do, must be abundantly unpleasant. However, as Hoossain cherished, in no ordinary degree, his countrymen's passive acquiescence in the will of fate, he did not break out into any unmanly lamentations. He contented himself with directing towards the old woman a glance which seemed at once to upbraid her, and to express resignation to everything that might await him.

“There is your money, my son,” said she, extending it towards him: “Allah forbid that

I should hurt so much as a hair of your head ! You have saved my life, and partaken of my salt, and sooner than do you wrong, I would submit myself to the bite of a thousand cobras ! Now, by what has passed, you must be convinced I have no desire of injuring you ; but, on the contrary, am anxious to return your kindness by every means in my power. Whilst you slept, not only your money but your life was in my hand ; and as I have restored you the first, be assured I am anxious to preserve the last. However, my son, by this time you are tolerably well refreshed, and it is necessary for you to be going. But first sit down a little, that I may give you certain knowledge which will be useful to you."

Whilst the old woman spoke this, Hossain fancied himself certainly in a dream. With passive submission he obeyed her directions, and sitting down on the ground, awaited what

she had farther to say. Having placed herself by his side, she began :—

“ My son, there are in this jungle, as you have proved by the accident which brought you in sight of our huts, abundance of serpents; I need hardly caution you to avoid them. But these are not the worst enemies you may chance to meet with as you proceed.”

“ Very true, mother,” returned Hoossain, who was fast recovering his composure : “ as you truly observe, there are tigers on all sides; and it will be prudent in me to pass the night always in a village, if I can manage to reach one : if necessity should oblige me to take up my lodging at the foot of a tree, you may be sure I will take care to have a good fire lighted; or, if I should think fit to travel by night, you may depend on it I will not move a step without a blazing mussaul,* suf-

* Torch.

ficient to light a palanquin and twelve bearers, much more myself, who am but a single man."

"Right, my son," said the old woman; "there are tigers in plenty, to be sure; but there are other enemies still, whom, as I tell you, you may chance to meet, and from whom neither fire nor torch will preserve you."

Hoossain was sorely puzzled, and sat silent with his eyes fixed on the ground, thinking within himself what his companion could possibly mean.

"For the life of me," said he at length, "I cannot find out what kind of enemies these may be. However, I have a stout heart and a strong hand, and if it be the will of Allah that I perish here, what can we do? That which shall be, will assuredly come to pass; as my father, with whom be peace! was careful to instruct me."

"May your days be prolonged, my son!"

returned the old woman. "Nobody can say anything to the contrary of what you have just affirmed. However, there is no harm in being warned, and in listening to the warning. Hearken, therefore, to the advice which I shall give you.

"No prudent man," continued she, lowering her voice, "should do as you have done—allow his compassion to lead him into the depths of a jungle, in which a thousand dangers lurk. Many a woman's cry is but a snare to turn the unwary from his way; and many have so turned, and have not lived to tell their mishap. Do you mark me, my son?"

"Truly yes, mother," returned Hoossain; "but it would be well for me to stop my ears. My heart is but foolish; and I do not think it would let me go on unmindful of such a cry as your's was just now."

“ Be warned, however, my son, and harden yourself,” said the old woman earnestly. “ As you have saved my life, so will I do my best to preserve your’s. I dare say you have felt lonely on your journey, and wished often for a companion ?”

“ Indeed that is no more than the truth,” replied Hoossain. “ A journey is doubly tedious if taken alone ; and the jungle never so gloomy as without company.”

“ Do not be too sure of that,” said the old woman, lowering her voice to a whisper ; “ better to be alone, than to have Azrael on your right hand !”

Hoossain started at the terrible name of the angel of death. “ Mother,” said he, “ if I listen to you much longer, I shall be too frightened to finish my journey at all ; and shall turn back until I can make it with a large company, which, to say the truth, I

should be sorry to do, as you will believe, when you know I am to be married directly I arrive at home."

"There is no need for fear, if you will but be guided by me," returned the old woman. "Go on without alarm, but avoid all other travellers; and if any should join themselves to you, get on with all the speed you can, and remember, the sooner you lose sight of them the better. Be a deaf man to the fairest speeches, and do not be tempted by the prospect of the greatest advantages. If you are prudent, you will abide by my counsel, and find your safety in it; for what wise man ever fell into a well, when he had a friend at hand to show him exactly whereabouts it lay?"

"Well, but suppose I am overtaken, mother, what then?" persisted Hoossain.

"Why then, in case of the worst, take

this," returned the old woman, giving him a very small silver box, on which certain characters were engraved. "Keep it concealed, except you are in absolute danger; and when you show it, say only, 'Life for life; and this was the price of Jewran Bee's!' And now, my son, go; and peace be with you!"

With these words the old woman arose. Hoossain rose likewise, and returning her benediction, prepared to proceed on his journey.

He had travelled so many days without meeting a single adventure that recalled the old woman's cautions to his mind, that he had pretty nearly forgotten them. He had been careful, however, to tie the little silver box round his neck, that he might not have to reproach his own carelessness, should any of the evils she had predicted really occur. Day after day, however, he thought less about it, his mind being in fact occupied by the pleasant

prospect of speedily meeting with Khataja, and celebrating his marriage with the least possible delay. Hoossain intended that the wedding festivities should be as splendid as his utmost means allowed, and he often put his hand upon his treasure, as if to assure himself that those means were in his power.

Three days more, and Hoossain knew that he should be clear of the jungle. His spirits rose in proportion to his progress ; and no man is more ready to confide in his fellows, than he who has happiness in near prospect. When, therefore, on this, the last morning but two, just as the broad daylight had overspread the heavens, he heard a prolonged wail, he turned his head immediately in the direction whence it proceeded, and saw a woman extended under a tree, apparently in the agonies of mortal pain.

At that moment the caution of the old woman of the huts rushed into his mind. He felt

a strange, unwonted struggle in his heart between compassion and prudence, and he paused a moment or two in doubt. "For this once, however, and for the sake of Khataja, I will be wise," thought he; and he absolutely ran forwards to escape the sooner from the spectacle of a distress, which he had resolved not to relieve.

The sound, however, pursued him,—the low, lengthened moan of a human being in extremity. Again Hoossain stood still;—his heart beat strongly, and he felt a strong sentiment of shame, that he had permitted any selfish thought of safety to steel his heart in a case like this. What danger, he asked himself, could he possibly apprehend from a poor wretch evidently on the brink of dissolution? When he came to relate his adventures to Khataja, how could he possibly gloss over such an instance of hard-heartedness, not to say

cowardice? The strong-armed Hoossain afraid of a dying woman! No! he resolved within himself, that this stigma should never attach to his name, and he retraced his steps with even more expedition than he had used in the first instance.

He came up to the woman, and looking into her face, found her eyes closed. He spoke, but received no answer, and he stooped down to ascertain whether she yet breathed. In an instant a noose was thrown around his neck, and Hoossain knew that he was in the power of the terrible P'HANSR-GARS.

His hands were seized at the same moment by the two confederates of the woman, who had been concealed on the other side of the road, and had rushed on him from behind. Already the cord was tightening,—Hoossain's life seemed at its close,—when the name of *Jewran Bee* escaped his lips. As if by magic,

the P'hanse-gars slackened their hold. "Dog, and son of a dog!" said the woman, "what hast thou to do with Jewran Bee?"

He wrenched his hand without difficulty from the grasp of the man on his right, and thrusting it into his bosom, drew forth the little silver box. "*Life for life,*" said he, "*and this was the price of Jewran Bee's.*"

The woman took it, examined it, and returned it. "Keep it," she said; "it may stand you in stead yet. Go on in peace!" and almost as suddenly as they had appeared before him, the P'hanse-gars were out of sight.

As soon as his terror permitted him, Hoossain ran onwards with all the speed to which he could compel his limbs; and, to own the truth, they trembled more than the youth would have cared to confess. He thought over all the counsels of the old woman of the hut, which this adventure had rendered completely

intelligible. He cursed his own foolish compassion, and vowed no more to sin against the most prudent caution. He determined to shut his ears against the cry of any woman, even although it were——no; there was, after all, a saving clause in favour of Khataja. But Hoossain resolved, in his secret soul, henceforward to be very careful of himself, and to leave strangers to get over their distresses as they could.

Never had Hoossain, celebrated as he was for being swift of foot, got over so much ground in the same space of time as on this day. He rested at night in a populous village, rejoicing in the security afforded by the house of the potail, with whom he had an acquaintance. Another day, and he not only found himself in the open country, but met with a party of his own townspeople, like himself returning homewards.

The rest of his journey Hoossain travelled not only pleasantly but merrily. He said nothing of his adventures in the jungle, resolving to trust them to no ear but that of Khataja, especially as he still possessed the talisman which had charmed away his intended murderers. It may be supposed that he was not long, after the first welcome, before he related to his mistress all that had befallen him, not omitting to add his resolution never more to allow his compassion to turn him one step out of his direct road. "That is but a foolish determination of thine, after all, friend Hoossain," returned the discreet Khataja. "If, in the one instance, thy pity threw thee into the midst of danger, in the other it provided thee with a safeguard. There were a thousand ways by which thou mightest have fallen into the hands of the P'hanse-gars, and where hadst thou now been without the gift of Jewran Bee ?

No ! Allah is just ; and a merciful action is like a seed planted in a fine soil, which is sure to produce fruit fourfold."

Of course Hoossain was convinced, for Khataja was not yet his wife. When she became so, she carefully preserved the little box, as a token of the goodness of her husband's heart, and she used to show it to her children when she related their father's adventures, as a proof that a good action never loses its reward. Happily, Hoossain never met the terrible P'hanse-gars in his subsequent career, so that he had no opportunity of discovering whether the virtues of Jewran Bee's amulet outlived the period of his first adventure.

THE MATE'S STORY.

“ NIGHTS like these,” said the mate, as he gazed up towards the brilliant sky which canopied us, for we were seated on the deck, on one of the loveliest nights that ever shone between the tropics,—a brisk wind filling our sails, and impelling us at a rapid rate on our direct course, and with a motion as steady as the arrow’s flight,—the *cuddy* behind us well lighted, and cheerful voices proceeding thence, whilst the sailors were pacing forwards in all the leisure which such a state of things at sea permits;—“ Nights like these always send my mind tra-

velling back into the past. Twenty years since, 'on such a night,' as Jessica would say, it was my fortune to form one of a boat's crew bent on a somewhat piratical expedition to one of the Azores. In short, I was with a party intending to aid and abet the captain of a man-of-war, under whom I was then serving, in abstracting a fair nun from the convent at Fayal.

"I was a boy,—a mere urchin at that time; but I had not listened to the sailors' yarns without being enlightened on the omnipotency of love,—a faith as prevalent with them as their belief in ghosts, hobgoblins, and 'chimeras dire;' I was, therefore, highly interested in the success of the enterprise in which we were embarked, and incessantly urged the men to rapidity. I do not know why I was selected from the numerous officers and middies on board the frigate," continued the mate; a

gleam of satisfaction lighting up his sunburnt and hardy countenance, doubtless as he remembered the preference thus exhibited by his superior ; “ I believe I was rather a favourite with the Skipper, and I am not ashamed to say of myself, that I do not recollect having been guilty of any conduct that would have brought on me the shame of disgracing his partiality.

“ The Captain himself had gone on shore in another boat well-manned, at least an hour before us. We found it lying under the shore, half the crew remaining in her, and the other half on the island with the Captain. According to my instructions, I immediately prepared to follow him, attended by three of my own men, and sufficiently well acquainted with the bearings of the place, to know how to steer my course. The men, aware that their services were required on a special occasion, followed me with alacrity, and obeyed my in-

structions to the letter. We were not long in reaching the wall of the convent-garden, and we proceeded cautiously, favoured by its shadow, until we were not more than ten paces from the gate. The night, though bright and starlight as this, was not lighted by the moon, the Captain's arrangements having been made with a view to her absence. It had excited some surprise amongst the crew generally, that we had been beating about the Azores at least a fortnight longer than we expected; but who, in a man-of-war, shall venture to breathe a comment louder than a whisper, on the actions of his superior? With all subordinates in that floating castle, the law may be expressed in Byron's line,—

‘Pacha, to hear is to obey!’

However, we were all aware, that the return of the Captain to the vessel to-night would be the signal for her immediate departure, and

every man had already received orders to that effect, so that we were under the double exhilaration of being engaged in 'perilous emprise,' and of enjoying that change of scene which sailors so dearly love. How welcome to them the stiffest gale that succeeds a monotonous calm!

"I looked at my watch in vain, for there was not light enough to enable me to distinguish the hour, as the moments wore away, and we listened in vain for the signal. At length, however, the dull tones of the convent bell, filling the air with a cadence which to me had never before sounded so thrillingly mournful, warned us that it was midnight, and that the sisterhood were about to engage in their devotions. Ten minutes afterwards we heard the sound of footsteps approaching cautiously, but still falling heavily. A low whistle warned us of the neighbourhood of our Captain, at the

same time that I was startled by the sudden rushing forwards of three men, who had evidently been concealed by the shadow on the opposite side of the entrance. I involuntarily cocked the pistol which I held in my hand, prepared to aid my Captain to the uttermost, when I discovered that the intruders were no other than part of the crew of the first boat, whose mission on shore was the same as our own.

“We lost not a moment beyond the exchange of the words,—‘*All well!*’ The Captain bore in his arms a burden wrapped entirely in a dark cloak, which somewhat diminished his speed; nevertheless, we were not long before we stood on the beach.

“Never, as the decks were cleared for action, did my heart palpitate so strongly as at this moment,—never, when the fray was over, and I found myself free from damage, had I felt such

a sensation of relief, as when I saw the Captain, still holding his prize, seated in his boat, and rowing towards the ship as rapidly as the best men amongst the crew could row him thither. My ears literally rang with a perpetual haunting of sound: I fancied I distinguished the hum of voices, and the rushing of close pursuit, in every breath of the breeze, and I hardly felt myself in safety until I leaped over the side of the ship, and found myself once more uncovered on the quarter-deck.

“ The Captain had given up the state-cabin, which had undergone sundry improvements and embellishments within the last week. I fancied I would have given the world for a look of its present occupant, and probably the Captain pretty well conjectured the state of my feelings. ‘ You are perfectly well aware, W.’ said he, when the vessel, under a press of sail, was going rapidly before the wind, leaving

the Azores far, far behind us, — ‘ of the nature of the enterprize in which you have been engaged. You have done me good service, and I shall not be long in finding an opportunity of convincing you how highly I estimate it. We have stolen a nun; but, no light word or thought, youngster. Your sister would not be more sacred to you than she to me, until we reach England. Meanwhile, if you are prepared to see, with due respect, the future wife of your Captain, I am commissioned to inform you she will be happy to add her thanks to mine for the service you have done us both, when she is somewhat recovered from the agitation which, you may suppose, she has undergone.’ ”

“ And was she beautiful, Mr. W. ? ” said I.

“ I thought her then,—and since I have seen her, year after year, in her characters of wife and mother, my opinion has been more than con-

firmed,—the loveliest woman I ever gazed on. Probably her beauty improved, as her mind expanded beneath the influence of Captain K.'s society, who was as accomplished a gentleman as he was a gallant officer. At first a slight shade of melancholy clouded her beautiful features; but this wore away in the happiness of her existence, as she became gradually weaned from the errors of her first faith. She was one of three children,—their father, a wealthy merchant in a neighbouring island. Bent on aggrandising his only son, he had felt no scruple in condemning his two daughters to the perpetual and gloomy imprisonment of a convent. Happily for herself, the elder sister delighted in her vocation; but the younger mourned over the unseen glories of the world from which she was excluded. The nuns of the convent of Fayal are not rigorously confined, frequently seeing the visitors who touch

at the island and visit the place from motives of curiosity. Indeed the sisterhood add to their resources by the sale of artificial flowers and sweetmeats of their own manufacture, and it was in negotiating for such sort of merchandise that Captain K. met his future wife. One interview followed quickly on another, and the fair one, 'nothing loth,' listened to his plan of escape. A pretence of illness excused her from the midnight orisons, and she managed to descend from the window of her cell, by the aid of blankets ingeniously converted into substitutes for a rope. Her father, I believe, was never reconciled to a marriage which, however, did not diminish the wealth he bestowed on his son, and this was the only drawback to Mrs. K.'s felicity."

"And her sister?"

"Is a nun still, for aught I know,—or frozen to an icicle," said the mate, with a shrug.

“ Eight bells, and I am officer of the next watch ; I think time has been polite enough to stay until I had regularly spun my yarn. I shall have plenty of work, I see, for the breeze stiffens,—so good night !”

A DAY AT SAINT HELENA.

THE sun had just gone down as we obtained the first distinct view of the rock of St. Helena. Black and stupendous it rose from the ocean, like a fragment from the wreck of some former world, a token of barrenness and desolation. We had run in so close to the African shore, that for three or four days we had had in sight the range of mountains and table-land that compose the southern point of the peninsula; but, connected as they were with all our ideas of beasts of prey, and man in his most savage state, they awoke no such feel-

ings of awe and melancholy as the spectacle now before us. It was a gloomy evening, and the dusky atmosphere seemed in unison with the sombre character of the place. We all stood on the poop, gazing with intense interest on the lofty peak, increasing in dimensions as we neared it, and awaiting the expected hail from the shore. As soon as we approached within reach of the sound, we heard the usual "*Ship ahoy!*" and replied accordingly. Our name and destination having been declared, we received the permission implied in "*You may proceed to anchor!*" And now we found sufficient amusement in watching the signal-lights on the rock, conveying to another point, also within sight, intelligence of our arrival. Altogether, the scene, picturesque in itself, was wonderfully embellished to our imaginations, by the fact that it was the first *land* with which we had

communicated since we quitted Madras, and we hailed it also as an earnest of our rapid approach to beloved England. Moreover we were to spend the next day on shore; and we were not generally old enough to be insensible to the charms of examining a spot in the habitable world we had never visited before, and one which most of us expected not to see again. In vain the accustomed signal for retiring, the four bells which warned us it was ten o'clock, sounded; we were in no humour for the dulness of slumber, and we continued to sit on the poop until the mid-watch was summoned.

The next morning shone gaily on us in all the splendour of a brilliant sun and a sky of cloudless azure. The town was visible, lying between two ranges of lofty rocks, the giant height of which diminished the houses and the church—considered apart, by the way, from

such juxta-position, a most miserable-looking building—into dwarfish insignificance. Nevertheless, the general effect was exceedingly picturesque: the town, with its white houses, looked very cheerful in the light of the smiling sun, and the masses of barren rock even had lost much of the melancholy character with which they were invested on the preceding evening. The barracks were erected on the side of an almost perpendicular rock, round which ran a line of fortifications. The landing-place was defended by a most formidable battery of cannon; and the whole of the war-like appearances before us reminded us, that we were indeed gazing on the prison which had holden, within its impregnable limits, the most ambitious spirit that had ever regarded this world as the mere storehouse from which to satisfy his own splendid covetousness of empire;—that we were looking also on his tomb!

Fresh fruit on the breakfast-table, luscious figs, peaches, melons, grapes, and the sickly rose-apple, all the produce of the island, gave us a very pleasant evidence that we were in immediate intercourse with *land*. The meal was speedily despatched, for probably the most enthusiastic sailor in the world never found himself at anchor without counting the moments until his foot once again pressed his mother earth. It is a tribute which our instinct pays to the element for which nature intended us. Our spirits rose very much above the temperate point; and witticisms, which would not have been tolerated in a calm, *out of sight of land*, were now hailed with bursts of applause, which must have been highly gratifying to those especially whose puns never before had elicited a smile. Dignity, this morning, laid aside his stilts; talent condescended to endure foolery; party-

spirit, that prevalent demon of discord on board all ships of this kind, sheathed his weapons. For once, a topic was on the *tapis*, which was equally agreeable to all; and as the *details* of the visit to St. Helena were not thought on at present, and the propriety of the visit itself was universally agreed to, there was nothing to disturb the present halcyon hour, which ushered in a day that was intended to pass in festivity.

Really the party made a very gay appearance. The ordinary dress worn on board was thrown aside for the occasion, and much splendour and finery taken from our several wardrobes to enhance the gaiety of the scene. A field-officer or two were rallied by the juniors on appearing "*in full fig*," which elegant designation was intended to describe their being in dress-regimentals. The ladies were appalled as ladies returning from India usually

are, very handsomely, and very *out-of-date*. Bonnets, especially, were of all the shapes that had been considered antediluvian for the last two or three years; and waists were a yard too short or too long—I forget to which enormity the offence inclined. A dandy or two exhibited in dark blue silk frocks; and a *ci-devant* adjutant made the cuddy ring with the clang of a most formidable pair of spurs. Altogether, when we assembled on the deck previously to leaving the ship, we certainly formed a group that could not have appeared at any public place in London without considerable *éclat*. We had one great advantage; being all ignorant of the proprieties of the present day, we were not over-critical on each other, and we were remarkably well satisfied with ourselves.

The first symptoms of dissatisfaction began to show themselves as soon as the boats were

ready. Who should compose the first party, was an important question ; and the old stumbling-block of precedence was again in our way. An arrangement, however, was effected where we had least expected it. Three or four of the ladies, who had stood much aloof from the rest, had privately decided on going in the same boat ; and that they might encounter no obstacle, had resolved to proceed in the last. This restored perfect harmony ; we quitted the ship in the best possible mood of mind to enjoy such a day on shore as we contemplated. Indeed it was almost impossible to indulge any but the most benevolent feelings under such a halcyon sky, with every prospect of novelty before us, and the certainty of experiencing that most pleasurable of all varieties, a day on land after two months on board ; for after all, the finest ship in the world, with all the luxuries afforded by the

best ordered table, is but a floating prison ;
and the passengers are seldom willing to make
the best of their situation by overlooking the
foibles of each other ; and yet,

“ It is a pleasant thing, I ween,
To sail upon the tropic sea,
When all around, and all between
The wave and sky looks cheerily.
The deep blue wave, the bluer sky,
The tall ship with its snow-white sail,
The seaman’s song, the boatswain’s cry,
Yea, even the bellowing gale,—
Each hath its charm,—and then we feel,
’Midst sights and sounds so strange,
A wish athwart our bosoms steal,
That we might ever range
O’er the grand deep,—for ever on,
Beneath the untainted air,
To see the islands of the sun,
And breathe the spice-gales there :
As passing guests to touch the land,
The tall good ship our home,
And so from east to western strand
For ever still to roam.”

However, such moods do not last long in
the most romantic temperaments. The moon

which gave birth to them wanes, and she is not more evanescent than her influences. Our instinct, our rational preferences, all incline us to long after our mother-earth; and who can resist those impulses?

As we landed on the island, and commenced our progress up the principal street of St. James's town, in which is situated Solomon's hotel, or boarding-house, whichever may be the title by which he chooses his abode to be designated, we felt that we were indeed nearing England. The paved street, with its neat white houses on either side, here and there a stall standing covered with fruit, the proprietor presenting the welcome sight of a white European countenance, reminded us that we had indeed quitted the Indian continent, and that we were denizens of a town built on the model of those villages which are daily springing up in the suburbs of the metropolis. We

walked onwards gaily, greatly to the prejudice of our China silk shoes, exhilarated by the novelties around us into complete forgetfulness of all minor injuries, even of the rays of a burning sun, beneath whose power we should never have dreamt of venturing in the land which we had quitted. Solomon's house is really, *in re ipsa*, no contemptible domicile, and contrasted with the necessarily confined limits of a cabin, assumes a very imposing appearance. We amused ourselves for some time in walking about the rooms, endeavouring to be reconciled to the absence of punkahs, and to the furniture *à l'Anglois* with which they were decorated. Bent, however, on crowding into the twelve hours we intended to spend on the island, as much of novelty as the situation afforded, we ordered a carriage, with a view of proceeding to the tomb of Napoleon, and thence to Longwood. Tar-

diness is by no means the sin of the place : in as short a time as possible, a carriage was at the door, capable of containing a party of four, and drawn by two horses, whose evident strength enabled them to perform the difficult journey which, as we afterwards found, they had to encounter. We sprang into the vehicle with alacrity, and ascending from the town, were very soon in a situation which had in it quite enough of terror to be classed with the sublime. The road winds up a rock nearly perpendicular, is of coursé artificial, just wide enough for a carriage to pass conveniently, one side presenting a precipice of several hundred feet, and the other a wall of solid rock of equal height, reflecting the heat of the sun with a fervour worthy of the torrid zone. The indefatigable horses pursued their arduous way with a rapidity that indicated both their strength and their excellent train-

ing, whilst the dizzy eyes of us, the occupants of the carriage, were instinctively averted from the precipitous descent, which a single false step would have compelled us to make. The town lay below, as if in a ravine that had once been the bed of a torrent, small as if it were a city of the fairies; and the cocoa and plantain trees assumed a dwarfish appearance, well proportioned to that of the houses. Our postilion occasionally pointed out to us certain spots which had acquired an interest from their connexion with the illustrious exile whose name filled Europe, especially *the Briars*, the house where he first resided, and which to the last he preferred to Longwood. I cannot enumerate all the things which struck us as remarkable on our progress; and probably to the mere reader they might appear trivial. We were not allowed to pass the hedge of aloes without remark, nor the seat

of one of the Members of Council, by the grounds of which our road lay, without some comment. As we approached the summit of the rock, the path really became terrific; from its excessive steepness, we were obliged to wind backwards and forwards, taking a retrograde motion for every fifty yards we advanced. At length we reached the level of the tomb, and rolled rapidly onwards. At the prescribed spot we descended from the carriage, and proceeded by a verdant foot-path to the chief object of our excursion—the grave of the mighty dead!

It is indeed a sequestered spot, meet for the purpose to which it is dedicated. Beneath those willows which so gracefully shadow it, he who rests beneath in quiet slumber, after a life of such unequalled agitation, was accustomed to sit with his faithful followers, discussing the past, and possibly, for who can

limit the delusions of hope?—forming visions for the future. The place was a favourite retreat, because there Napoleon felt that freedom of spirit which he never enjoyed when he knew himself under the surveillance of another. Here, at least, he was secure from the severe eyes of his watchful guards; here he could indulge in dreams of escape without being constantly roused from his vision by the spectre of the strong arm which encircled him. Here, too, he had, when the prospect of death lay before him, desired that his body might mingle with his parent dust. And his last desire was obeyed. The willows throw their branches over his grave, which is covered with a single stone, undegraded by an inscription. All is simple and grand. If permitted to indulge his own thoughts, the traveller finds the place admirably suited to the purpose to which it is dedicated, and looks round at the encir-

cling mountains as the meet ramparts which enclose the mortal remains of the mightiest name, that has at once stained and gilded the page of history.

But those contingents which constantly bring down our minds to the level of the vilest common-place, are to be found at the tomb of Napoleon. Here is the serjeant who shows the place, and has a tale to tell by rote of all the Emperor's likings and dislikings, reducing the hero to the level of the merest humanity. The information he has to convey, is of course doled out with the same admirable monotony as is adopted by the verger of St. Paul's or of Westminster Cathedral, when he thinks fit to murder history in his anecdotes of the mighty dead. But this infiction is not the worst. You are invited to drink from the well which furnished Napoleon with water,—*passé pour cela* ; a book is handed

to you, in which you are requested to inscribe your name, and being by this time thoroughly roused from any day-dream in which you may have indulged, you turn over the leaves in the hope of stimulating your curiosity, or perhaps reviving your interest. You are soon satiated with detecting the struggles of meanness, as it endeavours thus to unite itself with the greatness that is gone. You read a volume of names of which the world never has heard and never will hear; and many of them have ventured to append to their signature certain vile effusions, declaratory of their sentiments for the mighty dead, as if the span of the dwarf could compass the giant. On this leaf is a bombastic effusion in French, in which the writer solemnly dedicates himself to revenge on the English nation the wrongs suffered by Napoleon during his residence at St. Helena; on the opposite page, you are even

more disgusted by some vulgar scurrility, the handywork of one of that class, who think it desirable to prove their nationality by abusing everything not English. Here the sentimentalist pours out a rhapsody so inadequate to the subject, that you close the book in disgust; and you open it again to read the appalling words, "*John Jones visited the tomb of Napoleon Buonaparte, on the 1st of Nov. 1829—requiescat in pace!*" referring, according to every law of language, to the said *John Jones*, but obviously meant by the writer to be a prayer for the repose of the dead. These enormities, however, fill some two or three ledger-like volumes, and we throw them down at length, wearied and annoyed, quite resolute not to add our undistinguished names to the offensive catalogue. We turn, therefore, to go away, and an urchin meets us with a bouquet of scarlet geraniums gathered from

the hedge that encloses the garden, in the midst of which stands the dwelling-house of the serjeant. We are already in possession of sundry slips cut from the willow trees, and we add the perishable flowers to our store, turning away, despite the vexations we have endured, with slow and lingering footsteps.

Of *old* Longwood nothing remains but the outline of the building which has been converted into granaries for the Company's stores. Napoleon never occupied the present house, which is now the residence of the governor. Here, therefore, there was little to satisfy curiosity, and we retraced our path to the town more silently than we first travelled along it ; for we had at least gathered "food for meditation !"

We dined at Solomon's on the best produce of the island, complaining of nothing but the execrable sherry with which the table was

supplied. In the afternoon we visited his shop, amusing ourselves with the various curiosities, the workmanship of India and China, with which it was furnished, and supplying ourselves with sundry trifles, which we subsequently found we might have procured in England at two-thirds of the price paid at St. Helena. Experience is a species of wisdom seldom obtained gratuitously.

Altogether, the day did not fall so far beneath our anticipations as human pleasures generally do. Every hour had presented some novelty which kept alive interest to the last; and as the sun set, we stepped into the boat that was to convey us to our ship, extremely well pleased with all we had seen and felt, but by no means anxious to spend another day at Saint Helena.

THE RETURN.

“ MY DEAR JANE,

“ EVERYTHING is, at length, arranged to my satisfaction. The sick-certificate has passed the Board, and permission to return to Europe has consequently been granted. We shall sail by the ‘ General Palmer,’ the 1st prox°. Excuse haste; you will understand that the preparations for so long a voyage occupy almost every moment, and we shall have abundant leisure, thank Heaven, for the discussion of every possible point of interest, during my three years’ furlough. Love to my

mother and Charlotte. Selina joins in all manner of kind regards. God bless you.

“ Affectionately your’s,

“ GEORGE AINSLIE.”

“ *Madras, 25th March, 18—.*”

“ P. S. I hope you will not delude yourselves by expecting in Selina any thing very much above the common order. You know she is a foreigner, with relation to you girls, who have been born and educated in Old England. You must make up your minds to have a good deal to teach, and to be satisfied if she is tolerably tractable. My mother, I know, is all indulgence ; but I am half afraid of Charlotte, whose letters oblige me to believe that time has not softened her disposition to dislike and to censure, what she considers less refined or well-informed, or—*comme il faut*, that, I think, is the word,—than suits her habits. For *my*

sake, however, I hope she will make the best of the matter, and especially when she remembers how little choice a man has in India."

"The choice of remaining single, I rather apprehend, Mr. George," said Miss Ainslie, the '*Charlotte*,' referred to in her brother's letter. "So much for Postscripts, and *so much also for Buckingham!* I very much err, if our excellent brother is not most exceedingly ashamed of the sister-in-law he has thought fit to give us."

"Poor fellow, we will not prejudge him! Let us hope for the best," replied Jane, meaning to extenuate.

"Yes, my dear, on the calculation that there are only a hundred chances to one in favour of our being most dreadfully disappointed,—the usual result, so far as my observation goes, of

all ‘*hopes for the best.*’ To confess the truth, I have hardly patience with George. He was not a boy when he left England, and I, girl as I was, was sufficiently impressed with the airs of fastidiousness he exhibited amongst us, after his return from Addiscombe. *This* girl was *gauche*,—that stupid,—the other plain;—one too blue,—the next provincial! And *now*—” one of those untranslateable gestures, which are more expressive than volumes of words, supplied the lack of farther eloquence on the part of the lady.

“She may be amiable,” persisted Jane, “and one can forgive so much to a good heart.”

“Yes,—*forgive*; true; but it would be desirable to find matter of admiration, or at least, of esteem and companionship, in the wife of one’s brother, would it not? Do not look so very miserable, Jane; believe me, whatever I may say to you, is *to you alone*, and to no

other person in the world. Trust me, I am prepared to be as satisfied with our new sister as possible ; and, for mamma's sake, to conceal at least one half of all I shall probably feel, if the descriptions most of our Indian acquaintances give of females of this class be correct. Poor mamma ! it surely was mortification enough to her, to know that her son had married an illegitimate child."

"*That*, I agree, is deplorable ; but rather cause of pity for the person, who certainly, in such a case, is sooner victim than criminal," said Jane, glad to assume so advantageous a position. "Guilt, happily, is not hereditary."

"But the nurture of the infant,—the tuition of the child,—the companionship of the girl ! surely, all these tend to form the character ; surely, no human mind, be its strength what it may, can withstand the influences of each of those periods of existence ! If so, education is

nothing; and it would be wise to leave us all to ourselves; convinced, that if we be born straight or crooked, so we shall continue."

Jane sighed and was silent.

"There is one advantage," continued Miss Ainslie, "in the present train of my feelings. Mrs. George Ainslie can scarcely fall *below* the standard to which my imagination has brought her. To expect little, is a good security against disappointment."

"Against the *pain* of it, certainly," replied Jane, smiling. "But I do not know that we should be much the gainers, were our anticipations always subjected to your rule."

The house of Mrs. Ainslie was near Winchester. It was neither very magnificent in its dimensions nor imposing in its aspect. But the eye of the traveller never rested without delight on its graceful covering of mingled ivy and roses, intruding, as it did, over the gothic

windows ; nor did the visitor ask greater splendour when he was surrounded by the elegance of its interior, and viewed all the graces of the abode, under the mellow light admitted through the beautiful painted glass, of which the upper parts of the windows were composed. The grounds too, if not on an extensive scale, were beautifully laid out. The green-house was unexceptionable ; so were the shrubberies and the pond ;—the *tank*, as it had been called since George went to India, who in his allusions to it, always described it by that name. Altogether, the place was admirably suited both to the income of Mrs. Ainslie and the position she occupied in the world. People too, who are accustomed to consider trifling circumstances as indicative of character, would have augured well of that of its owner, from the absence of pretension which pervaded the whole establishment. Here were no attempts at a style and

appearance beyond the positive sphere in which Mrs. Ainslie was placed, and to which her income was not absolutely adequate, — no shadow, in a word, without substance. The late Mr. Ainslie was connected with some of the most ancient families of England, but his fortune, such as it was, had been acquired during the course of a laborious life at the bar, and he had taken the unusual step of bequeathing the principal part of that fortune to his two daughters. In other respects, it should seem that his views were eccentric, for he had, during his son's boyhood, avowedly intended that he should enter his own career, supported by such favourable auspices as the introduction of a successful father. Mr. Ainslie piqued himself exceedingly on his intuitive perceptions of character, and it probably originated from this peculiarity, that just as George was emerging from boyhood into youth, Mr. Ainslie thought

fit to change his destination, so entirely, as to accept with gratitude the promise of a friend to procure him an appointment to the Madras Engineers. Consequently, George was removed to Addiscombe, and ere he had completed his second year there, he was fatherless.

Mrs. Ainslie loved her only son with all a mother's love, and deplored accordingly the partial will of her husband; which placed it out of her power, with any consideration of prudence, to alter the destination of George. Perhaps the feeling she indulged, that he had been unjustly disinherited, increased her maternal fondness for him. It is certain that the anguish of separation plunged her into a violent illness, from which she long suffered, and which very lingeringly quitted its prey.

Not that Mrs. Ainslie was insensible to the merits and graces of her two fair daughters. Her fault, perhaps, extended not beyond an

exaggeration of the deserts of her son, heightened by the apparent injustice of his father. She did not love her girls the less, but her boy the more. And if they,—those daughters,—were conscious of the dispositions of her heart, they rather shared her tenderness, than regretted its direction.

The marriage of George had indeed been an unexpected blow ; an affliction their worst fears had never anticipated. They had regarded him always as condemned to a solitary existence during the spring and summer portion of life ; but after all that had been said and written on the subject, they had never entertained even the vaguest apprehension of his marrying in India. And a woman born, educated in India ! a natural child ! a half-caste ! They had heard so much of this unfortunate class : had imbibed so many prejudices relative to it ! George himself had, during the

few first years of his Indian career, written such volumes expressive of absolute loathing and contempt towards the individuals who composed it !—Mrs. Ainslie's prejudices had indeed received a terrible shock. If she had one weakness in the world, it was in favour of honourable descent. She valued highly the unblemished lineage of herself and her husband. The want of fortune she esteemed lightly, and was too right-minded ever to permit it to affect her appreciation of the individual. But family pride was in truth her vulnerable point ; and how cruel the wound she had received ! Her only son had introduced into her family a person, to whom the law allowed no claims of paternity whatever. If her father's descent were even of royal exaltation, *she* had neither part nor lot in the matter, and had no right to call that father's kindred her's. Moreover, Mrs. Ainslie had

such strong faith in the power of education, dated the period when that of the heart should commence, at so early an age, habitually considered female virtue so much an *inheritance*, that to feel herself bound to class her son's wife amongst the children of shame, inflicted a pang far more bitter than any merely worldly degradation. Under other circumstances she would indignantly have rejected such companionship for her own daughters; and now they were compelled to receive it in the form of a *sister*—one of themselves—bearing their name—their only brother's wife! But notwithstanding the keenness and strength of her grief, Mrs. Ainslie had too much discretion to impart it to her daughters, which would have been to ensure their participation. When tidings of the marriage first reached her, they were fortunately on a visit at the house of a relative, or possibly the first burst

of her grief, and it may be added, *resentment*, would have rendered any subsequent restraint of prudence useless. They were absent long enough to allow her to make the necessary communication to them by letter, so that the outpourings of sudden indignation had evaporated both in the mother and her children when they met. Their first conversation on the matter was constrained on both sides ; for both parties being ignorant with what feelings the other regarded it, were cautious of advancing aught that might be offensive. The girls especially, aware of Mrs. Ainslie's partiality for her son, felt the topic to be one of more than ordinary delicacy on their part, since any strong expression of condemnation *might* have been construed into an unamiable desire in them to depreciate a *favorite*. Mrs. Ainslie was both too wise and too candid to affect entire approbation. She con-

fessed that George's was a marriage she never could have advised, and hardly have sanctioned, if he had thought it necessary to ask her consent. But then his position offered so many extenuations of his imprudence ! Loving his mother and his sisters as he had always done, he must necessarily have felt the solitariness of his Eastern home as more than usually irksome ! Then female society was, in the course of a military life, often absolutely unattainable in India ; so that to stumble on a young and disengaged, and probably pretty female, must appear to one who had suffered under this privation, as an oasis in the desert of his pilgrimage. It could not be denied, that it would have been more desirable, if George had happily encountered a girl of European parentage ; but who can calculate on the force of circumstances which have never operated on themselves ? The affair was now past remedy,

and it would be wise to look only on the pleasurable side of it. Above all, considering their immense distance from George, and the long interval between the despatch of a letter and the receipt of its answer, it would be advisable to refrain from all expression of disapprobation, and to congratulate him on the event, with all the affection *his* relation to them demanded. Even Charlotte's voice offered no dissent, and *her* letter was not inferior in kindness to that written by her mother.

It was just three years after the tidings of George's marriage had reached them, when they were called to welcome him and his wife *home*! They arrived at the Holme, for that was the name by which Mrs. Ainslie's house was known, late in the evening; and George so much engrossed their attention, their thoughts were so occupied by the change in *his* appearance, that, although they did not

allow themselves to be deficient in kindness of manner to Mrs. George Ainslie, they absolutely had not leisure to be critical. The alteration in their brother indeed struck them forcibly, perhaps painfully. And yet it was nothing beyond what might reasonably have been expected, considering the years they had been separated, the climate to which he had been exposed, and the severe illness he had suffered. But then his manners were also so much, so *very* much, altered ! Yes ; life does not pause at the point where memory rests ; and although “ the boy be father of the man,” it is rarely that the friends of the youth are aware of the existence of qualities a few years will develope and strengthen. And then manner—mere manner—so much depends on circumstances. It is so considerably influenced by the habits of those in whose society we pass the greater part of our time ; by our views

of men and things, acquired by looking out on the horizon of human life, from the position we ourselves occupy ! Above all, when any strong attachment binds us to another, and we are associated, not only habitually but constantly, with that other ; then the tone of our whole mind is insensibly modulated to harmony with the beloved one's, much more *manner*, which is but an indication of mind. George, the returned Indian, had passed through scenes quite sufficient to obliterate the peculiarities which had distinguished George the Cadet, and to impart others which could hardly fail of making an unpleasant impression on those whose memory had fondly cherished the image of the youth from whom they had parted, and who had no power of heightening or softening the tints of that image by a knowledge of the scenes through which

he was to pass, and which *must* mar his brightness.

The sisters occupied one apartment ; and when they retired that night, they were long silent. At length Charlotte perceived that Jane was weeping, and this sight was sufficient to destroy her own self-command. They wept together ; and there needed no words between them to communicate the disappointment they had endured, the real pain they suffered.

“ Perhaps it is but manner ! ” said Jane at length ; the first to speak, and, if possible, to extenuate.

“ *Only* manner,” acquiesced Charlotte ; “ heaven forbid that a change of heart should be the root of the evil ! Oh, no ! even *I*, I the censorious, the hard-judging, am resolved to believe that that listlessness, that apathy, does not extend beneath the surface.”

“ I hope it has not attracted mamma’s attention ; it will give her so much pain ! ” said Jane, earnestly.

“ It has *not*,” replied Charlotte decisively : “ her understanding was awake to-night only through the influence of her affections ; and she was so engrossed by feeling and enjoying her own tenderness, that she was not sensible of the lukewarm exhibitions of *his* filial and fraternal love. I have heard that the terrible climate of the East has a tendency to impart this icy indifference of manner. Perhaps, also, the sickness he has suffered may have disabled him from expressing his feelings with sufficient energy ; so that, after all, his manners may not do justice to his heart.”

“ A thousand thanks, dear Charlotte ; I feel grateful to you for defending our brother. George *cannot* have ceased to love the sisters

of his youth, and to-morrow we shall see him more like himself. His wife too——” Jane paused.

“ Yes, his wife,” —repeated Charlotte.—
“ There is no complaint to be made of her person ; Nature, at least, has been bountiful. Those large, resplendent, Oriental eyes, are never equalled amongst the children of a less fervid climate ; her luxuriant, glossy hair, if more naturally dressed, would indeed be an ornament. Her countenance too, is mild ; though I confess, when one looks at her eyes alone, one is disappointed that they do not impart to its expression a higher character. Of her manners one can judge little ; embarrassment, under the circumstances, was so natural.”

Jane’s acquiescence could but follow a remark so obvious, and the sisters betook themselves to their peaceful slumbers. They had

not yet passed that blissful epoch of human life, in which,—evil as to-day may be,—the morrow is always full of hope and promise.

On their first interview, Mrs. George Ainslie had indeed been silent, from that “natural embarrassment” to which her sisters-in-law attributed her constraint. When she arrived at “the Holme,” she had been but a week in England, and her first sensations of surprise at the novelty of all that surrounded her, had not subsided. In the manners of her husband’s family too,—in the general air of their abode,—there had been a something above her expectations,—beyond her experience. She had no idea of the quiet elegance of an English household, in that rank of life into which she was suddenly transplanted. She was not altogether unaccustomed to the society of young, unmarried, and tolerably educated females, when just imported to India, and when all the gloss and freshness of

Europe might be supposed to remain about them. But Charlotte and Jane Ainslie, even to *her* indiscriminating eye presented no resemblance to any class with which she had hitherto been acquainted. Without being willing to allow her consciousness of inferiority, even if she had been able to define it, she had that painful sense of littleness, by which the most presumptuous are secretly compelled to bow beneath the influence of higher intellect. Her mother-in-law was even farther removed beyond the limits of her comprehension. European females of that age to which Mrs. Ainslie had attained, are rarely seen in India. She was not old enough to deserve the appellation of "*venerable*," but her dignity of manner and appearance affected Mrs. George with an awe so unpleasant, as to be connected, even at this early stage of their acquaintance, with a sentiment of positive dislike. She even feared to indulge the secret thoughts of her

heart in the presence of a person who seemed to command the respect of all. She shrank from her eye, as if it could have penetrated all the feelings she was desirous of shrouding in the deepest veil of obscurity. Before she retired that night, she had mentally arrived at the resolution, that her residence at the Holme should not, under any circumstances, exceed the period of a *visit*. It never should be her abode. She felt that its atmosphere was by no means such as would permit the free indulgence of her habits and preferences; and to remove from its influence, therefore, as soon as possible, appeared to her the most desirable course she could pursue.

As to George, probably he had experienced less emotion than any other individual of the party, whether from that acquired apathy to which his sisters had alluded, or whether it was the natural consequence of the aspect of things

to *his* eye. At Mrs. Ainslie's age,—just when, having passed the meridian, life and beauty begin to wane gradually, an interval of seven years effects no change so marked, as to excite in the spectator any sentiments of surprise or regret. To the eye of her son, there was scarcely one tint of less brightness in his mother's complexion,—one beam the less in the light of her kind eye. His sisters had expanded into a perfection of youthful beauty far exceeding his expectations, and having paid it the tribute of unfeigned admiration, he thought no more of the matter. The house too,—even to the colour of the window-curtains,—was precisely the same as he had left it,—and, except the demise of a favourite dog, there was nothing that realized to his apprehension the actual duration of his absence. Notwithstanding his apathy, he really loved his family—his home—his country, and though

not the *firmest* husband in the world, was too good a son and brother to dream of sacrificing their society to the mere caprice of his wife. He retired, therefore, to rest with his mind in the blandest mood of satisfaction, and slept as soundly as *he* ought to sleep, who, after a long flight, folds his wings once more in his parent-nest.

A trial of a very few days was quite sufficient to establish, in the mind of Charlotte, a firm conviction that her sister-in-law was, what she called, absolutely *impracticable*. Even Jane,—charitable Jane, the characteristic of whose mind was “to think no evil,” was compelled reluctantly to admit, that Mrs. George did not evince many symptoms of companionship. At their table,—in all home-occupations or amusements, she was invariably silent and listless. She was of the class of *fainéants*, and how to dispose of the time which hung so heavily on

her hands, was a source of constant irresolution. She did not like reading;—she even tired soon of the lightest novel. As to any thing of a more serious character, her mind was as incapable of comprehending it, as the intellect of a child. Above all, she had no desire of improvement. Constrained and awed as she felt herself in the society of the Ainslie family, she attributed it to their proud, cold, stately manners, and would not listen to the whisper of her own heart,—that it in fact originated in her consciousness of inferiority. She was one of those who escape considerable embarrassment by being quite satisfied of their own pretensions to consideration. She would have felt such neglect as inflicted on her the penance of sitting down a whole evening in a ball-room, or of being passed over at a dinner-party; but she had not tact enough to resent the absence of all appeals to her opinion on those topics of constant dis-

cussion amongst the members of a circle distinguished for the elegance of their pursuits and the perfection of their attainments. She liked exceedingly to ride or drive to Winchester, and to meet the gaze of many admiring eyes, as they rested on her pretty, and, what was more striking, very foreign countenance. She had no particular aversion to accompanying the party in a round of morning-calls, because she could sit quietly, uttering nothing beyond monosyllables,—contented that the whole *frais* of conversation should be borne by her companions. It was a terrible annoyance when a country ramble was proposed and adopted. She detested walking, it was so contrary to her habits. She had no idea that *ladies* walked so much in England! She thought palanquins would be such an improvement! Then she had no eye for the picturesque,—no heart for the glories of creation.

“ She never felt the witchery of the soft blue sky,”—the charms spread by the divine hand over the universal world. “ Meadows trim with daisies pied,” awakened no associations in her mind ; for, accustomed to a tropical climate, she scarcely comprehended the loveliness of the youth of the year in England. She could not understand, far less participate in, the pleasure attached to finding the earliest violet,—the first primrose. She never thought of wearing an old straw bonnet in their rural walks ; she always went out as fine as millinery could make her, and her feathers, and ribands, and fashionable pelisse, were everlastingly in her way if she attempted to follow Charlotte through a gap in the hedge, or to penetrate a thicket with Jane, for the purpose of reaching some good point of sight, which otherwise they could not approach except by a long circuit. But *en revanche*, her toilette for the breakfast-

table, far from being *recherchée*, degenerated into absolute slovenliness; consequently, when an unexpected visitor arrived, she was obliged to retreat as speedily as possible to improve her appearance, and, as that was an elaborate operation, on more than one occasion the guests had departed without seeing her. The senior Mrs. Ainslie was particularly annoyed by *contretems* of this kind; and even George himself was roused to express a wish that Selina would dress for breakfast. But “she had not been used to it,—did not like it,—it was always *so* uncomfortable,—it was *so* tiresome before breakfast, and detained her *so very* long from the breakfast-table;” and, therefore, Selina continued to be “*unfit to be seen*” as usual. Beneath all her listlessness of manner, the acute eye of Charlotte was not slow in detecting the fund of obstinacy which ensured the ultimate success of all her projects and wishes, by its untiring pa-

tience. She received remonstrances and persuasions with the same passive smile, and they were equally uninfluential. She never contradicted by words or gestures,—never appeared sullen or discontented,—but invariably pursued the path of her own inclinations, unmoved by the evident desires of every other person. Of the history of the country to which she had been transplanted, she knew nothing; consequently the frequent excursions made to places to which recollections of historical interest attached, were mere drives, and no more. She had not the remotest idea of the existence of the five orders of architecture; and to her ear the words “Saxon, Gothic, and Italian arches, pillars, &c. &c.,” were *heathen Greek*. It required no considerable penetration to discover her weariness when the conversation of any circle to which she was invited, touched on the literature of the day, or those topics of higher

interest which are constantly matter of discussion at the tables of the superior orders of society. She had been accustomed, in India, to admit visitors from noon until three o'clock, the usual hour of mess-dinners; and these visitors were generally young, unmarried subalterns, who, from lack of other occupation, were glad to bestow themselves and their dulness, on any body whose own inanity did not impel them to "rouse and bestir themselves" to any degree of mental exertion. *There*, however large the cantonment in which she might be residing, she knew every body, and was able to understand and enjoy every morceau of scandal that the most minute *grubber after offal of this kind* could pick up. Such reports are always floating in a society where there is little extraneous matter of conversation, and where the slighter the stimulus the more acceptable to the constitution. Amusement is valued not in proportion

to the difficulty, but the facility of its attainment. Very young men, half-educated, and quite ignorant, find it a very exhilarating occupation to wander from house to house repeating every atom of anecdote they have heard in each ; and are quite *ecstasiés* if they are able to retail to Mrs. C. any unpleasant remark Mrs. P. may have made on *her*. They know such a piece of information will have the effect of causing first a shyness,—then an explanation,—then a fracas,—between the two ladies, and they delight to be auditors of a *pitched battle* of this kind, as they term it. Then there is another *façon de passer le tems*, to which females of Mrs. George Ainslie's class are, in India, supposed to be too well inclined,—*firtation*. No English officer ever, in his own secret estimation, assigns to a half-caste lady an equality with his own countrywomen. He assumes a more careless tone in addressing her,

and ventures on a thousand impertinences he would not have dared to exhibit elsewhere. From defect of education, and the inexperience of those wholesome restraints imposed on the early years of English girlhood, females, born and educated in India, are absolutely ignorant of the manners that ought to be observed to them: conscious of the estimation in which they are holden, they do not respect themselves, and do not dream of maintaining themselves in the position which the preservation of their proper dignity absolutely demands. The spurious pride which they possess, leads them to the assumption of a thousand ridiculous airs and affectations, which serve no other end than to add to the amusement of the other sex, and lower them in the estimation of the more sensible part of their own. It is matter of constant observation, that no half-caste female ever submits to those privations, or is capable of

those acts of self-denial, which many English wives consider imperative on them, should the husband be, as is too often the case, in embarrassed circumstances. The less the intellect of any woman is cultivated, the greater is her love of dress; and expensive indulgence, in this particular, has had the effect of adding considerably to the involvements of many husbands besides Mr. George Ainslie, whose “*Scelina*” had as noble an ambition of out-dressing her associates, as ever animated the breast of any flippant, under-bred female in the eastern or western hemisphere.

The sudden death of one of the members for the borough of Towerbridge, a few miles from the Holme, and the necessity of electing another representative, afforded the fair Asiatic, as soon as she could be made to comprehend the matter, a very exhilarating prospect of amusement. The new candidate,—or rather *one* of

the new candidates,—for a contest was expected, —was the son of a very old friend, and distant relative, of Mrs. Ainslie's; consequently the warmest wishes of her family were expressed in his behalf. They knew little of him personally; but Mrs. Ainslie was not exempt from the prejudices of friendship, and she very highly appreciated his father's son. Nor did his manners, when he visited the Holme, by any means tend to diminish this partiality. He was handsome,—that first passport to favour,—courteous, and unassuming. He expressed his pleasure in making the acquaintance of one whom he had long been taught to consider a friend, and whose intimacy he trusted he should be allowed to cultivate. At least, he flattered himself he came with hereditary claims to be taken on trial; and if Mrs. Ainslie did not absolutely forbid him, he meant to inflict his presence on her and her family as often as the

fatiguing pursuit in which he was at present engaged, would permit him. He regretted,—deeply now he knew all that he had lost,—that he should appear so ungracious as to seek them only when his own more personal interests brought him into their neighbourhood. He explained that, on quitting Oxford, he had been a wanderer on the Continent during some years; and of late, he had been so engrossed by various demands on his time and attention, as imperative as they were unattractive, that the indulgence of his own particular wishes had been out of the question.

All this, enforced as it was by her memory of his father, and heightened by the advantages of Mr. Mannering's person and address, considerably confirmed Mrs. Ainslie's prepossession in his favour. He accepted her invitation to remain at the Holme during that day, and his efforts to please never relaxed. In many cases

this effort alone, if apparently disinterested, insures success. Our human nature is pleased to find that another, whom we do not despise, deems it worth while to be assiduous for our approbation. It is a tacit homage to our superiority which the wisest of us seldom rejects. It is flattery in its least suspicious—its most delicate form. But this was not Mr. Man-nering's only claim to favour. He was the farthest removed from presumption, and that vulgarity which we call *forwardness*, of any thing in the world ; nevertheless, the principal part of the conversation fell to his share. He had, as he said, travelled over much of the European continent, and his travelling had evidently had a higher object than to pass over a considerable space of the earth's surface in the shortest possible time. He had seen all that was most notoriously worthy of attention ; and remarked, with exquisite tact, on those

minuter traits of national difference which escape persons of coarser perceptions. He had also that high faculty of mind which enables its possessor to generalise, and to deduce abstract truths from various facts; and he rendered this apparent without ostentation or pedantry. Then he was a connoisseur in many accomplishments which he himself did not possess. He knew little of music,—played on no instrument,—but, with a delicate ear, and a fine voice, he possessed a perfect knowledge of the various schools, and really felt and enjoyed Charlotte's exquisite pianoforte-playing. He turned over the fine engravings that filled the drawing-room portfolios, and, in commenting on them, dwelt on the peculiar excellences of such of the originals as he had seen abroad. Occasionally he made slight classical allusions; and when he found these were understood, he enlarged on them. He spoke much of poetry

also, and the drama, as connected with the subjects of the plates they were examining, and even George felt the attainments of his youth to be not quite forgotten; they were awakened from the sleep into which they had been cast by long neglect; and *he* was doubly pleased with a person, who had been able to arouse him to a consciousness of possessing wealth which he had long ceased to remember he had ever been at the trouble of accumulating.

And Charlotte;—the conversation of Mr. Mannering seemed to open a new world to her vision. She had never before been brought into contact with one possessing such varied attainments united to so great a charm of manner. The acquirements of the schools were softened by all the graces of society, and the pursuits in which her intellect had always delighted, were clad in double charms for her henceforward. It seemed as if she had not till

then done them full justice, — comprehended all their excellence. She fancied that she had hitherto contemplated genius as an abstract idea, rather than a personal existence. There were some topics of literature on which her real opinions had hitherto been locked in the depths of her own heart, consequently her delight was the more intense when she heard Mr. Mannering maintain theories and sentiments which appeared to her as if coined in the mint of her own mind. In fact, Charlotte Ainslie possessed intellectual powers of an infinitely higher order than those of any other individual of her family. They were all refined and well-informed people ; but they had not capacity to comprehend the real enlargement of *her* understanding ; and her acquaintance with Mr. Mannering was the first circumstance that enlightened her with regard to the origin of the many solitary feelings, — the occasional sighing after what she

had deemed a visionary companionship, that had sometimes thrown a shadow over her existence. No two sisters were ever united by stronger affection than herself and Jane ; but though Jane was always her friend, there were moments in which Charlotte felt she could not be her companion. They looked upon existence from different heights, and of course many points of view were apparent in the enlarged horizon of the more elevated, which were invisible to the humbler level. There was no assumption of superiority in the one, nor any avowal of conscious inferiority on the part of the other ; nevertheless, there was a tacit understanding of the matter which pervaded the whole of their daily life. Charlotte was the senior by a year, and if they ever thought of assigning her ascendancy to any particular cause, this of course suggested itself as a very natural one. Perhaps also the slight degree of

satire which pervaded Charlotte's observations on persons and things, might be attributed to the lurking conviction that she was not completely understood. From the commencement of her acquaintance with Mr. Mannering, it was evident she was disposed to view the failings of the species with greater indulgence, and if her manner hitherto had been deficient in one single grace, it had now acquired the finishing touch,—*softness*.

The result of the contested election became now an object of great importance at the Holme. Mr. Mannering formed one of their circle as often as he could escape from the committees, dinners, and convivialities, which are the penalty to be paid by all persons similarly situated. Mrs. George Ainslie rejoiced in the addition of visitors drawn to the house at this crisis, and in the fêtes enjoyed and anticipated. When she could be made to comprehend the

nature of the object in view, she was almost animated in her expressions of interest in Mr. Mannering's success: and on these occasions her face acquired all the animation,—almost *intelligence*,—necessary to its perfection. She looked lovely enough to account for the attention she received, and for the admiration with which occasionally Mr. Mannering himself regarded her. She began gradually to feel less constraint in his presence, and to be quite satisfied when they met at various houses, if the natural course of things devolved on him the office of escorting her to the dinner-table. When seated, their conversation, hardly exceeding a whisper, appeared so earnest and so satisfactory, that once or twice Charlotte felt herself regarding their proceedings with surprised and painful attention. But, in the midst of this almost unconscious watchfulness, a glance from Mr. Mannering would wander towards her, so

indicative of the communion of his mind with her's, and so expressive of the amusement he was deriving from the simplicity of his companion, that her observations generally ended in an increased *friendship* for him, and a deeper regret that George had sacrificed himself to a person so inordinately weak and vain as Selina.

Selina, however, was beginning to experience a very different train of thought, originating in almost the same source,—the attentions of Mr. Mannering. She half suspected she had made a sad sacrifice of herself by accepting a Lieutenant of Engineers in India. She was sensible of sundry regrets that her *debüt* on the theatre of life had not been made in England, whose more extended arena, she flattered herself, would have afforded her fitter scope for the display of her attractions. Sometimes she compared mentally the listless apathy of her husband, with the animation, the gallant atten-

tions of the new candidate, and such comparisons certainly were not to the advantage of the former. Not that Mr. Mannering equally pleased Mrs. George Ainslie's taste at all times. She thought often, that his assiduities to her sister-in-law were very much out of place, and she listened to their discussions on literature and similar topics with an impatience apparent to the most superficial observer. In truth, it must be confessed that not topics of this kind alone were very wearisome to her; there were but three subjects on which she could dilate for hours, not only untired, but with the highest satisfaction,—herself, dress, and scandal. The last of these themes, might be imagined entirely out of the pale of her present enjoyment, from her ignorance of such family affairs in the neighbourhood of her sojourn, as furnish food for the indulgence of the appetite. Her observations on this account were but the

more concentrated, and the minute information she possessed of every little characteristic peculiarity of her husband's family, must have been surprising to any uninitiated person. She felt peculiar satisfaction in communicating, at every possible opportunity, to Mr. Mannering, such traits as she thought would excite an unfavourable sentiment of Charlotte. Her pride,—her *bookishness*,—her sarcasms,—all were commented on, and repeated, with an impressiveness proportioned to the speaker's desire that her auditor should imbibe the same opinions. Mr. Mannering always received these communications with a smile untranslateable by his companion, and therefore assigned by her to the source most in accordance with her own views. As to dress,—the next subject to her heart,—she revelled in the *Magasins des Modes*, and had become so intolerable a pest to the milliner at Winchester employed by the Ainslie family, as

any profit gained by her caprices could scarcely counterbalance. It was her insatiate thirst for change and novelty that almost exhausted the patience of the work-people. Her great variety of apparel was indeed the first occasion on which Mrs. Ainslie was induced to depart from a principle she had laid down for herself, and to which hitherto she had invariably adhered,—that of non-interference between her son and his wife. The advice she at length ventured, was offered in the mildest manner, and the most sincerely deprecatory of any intention on her part to annoy or control Selina. But, alas! though quite sensitive to the least possible annoyance, Selina was amenable to no control. She had been accustomed all her life to that thoughtlessness of money which obtains in India, and her expenditure had never been restricted by any considerations of economy, because she knew that any thing for which she

could not immediately pay, would be placed without hesitation to her husband's account. She had no idea that credit on so liberal a scale was not to be procured in England, where people are more cautious in their views of ways and means. In fact she knew nothing of the value of money in a society so constituted as that to which she had been lately introduced, and could not be made to comprehend the absolute necessity of regulating her expenditure by her income. So that her wants were supplied without demur, it had never occurred to her that it was any part of her conjugal duty to ascertain the amount of her husband's receipts, and calculate from that what might be the legitimate extent of the indulgence of her wishes. Therefore, when Mrs. Ainslie attempted to rouse in her a sense of this necessity, she opposed only an inveterate fit of the sullen; and was not restored to her usual placidity, until she had

proved her utter contempt of every judgment not accordant with her own, by purchasing a remarkably smart hat and feathers at Winchester. As to *herself*, the third topic likely to interest her, she was assailable by flattery to an extent hardly credible to the youngest Miss just emancipated from the nursery, under the safeguard of the usual quantity of maternal premonitions. It has been said, that women in India of her class fall readily into a habit of *flirtation*. They are accustomed to a strain of compliment so grossly exaggerated, as entirely to pervert their moral sense, as a person, constantly indulging in the free use of cayenne pepper, loathes simple food. As to Mrs. George Ainslie, far from considering her position as a married woman restrictive upon this point, she valued it rather as a means of indulging her desire of admiration with impunity. Without exactly comprehend-

ing the theory of Italian *cecisbeism*, she had been accustomed, since her marriage, to form her practice on it. Mr. Mannering was more frequently thrown in her way than any other gentleman of her acquaintance, and consequently appeared to her to be her immediate property. She considered the attentions he paid to Charlotte as so many infringements on her own rights; and her feelings towards her sister-in-law were proportionably hostile. She greatly preferred Jane, whose unpretending and quiet manners never threatened her with the competition she so much dreaded. Once or twice, with the small cunning peculiar to little minds, she had attempted to form a coalition with Jane, by throwing out hints of the arrogant assumptions of Miss Ainslie, and endeavouring to suggest that it originated entirely in the tactics of her sister, that Jane seemed to fall naturally into playing a secon-

dary rôle in society. Jane was so fondly attached to Charlotte, and naturally so unsuspecting, that Mrs. George Ainslie's hints almost assumed the form of broad assertions before they were entirely comprehended. When at length Jane was obliged to understand, it is questionable whether her disgust at the suggester did not equal her horror at the suggestion. She said little, however, to Selina herself, and nothing to Charlotte. She was too amiable to desire such a *démelée* as, she was certain, would be consequent on her communication. She judged Selina to be a person whose weakness led her to the perpetration of acts which had the character of absolute wickedness; but she was charitable enough to acquit her of any positively guilty intention. Jane herself was too right-minded to suspect the crookedness of the paths by which Selina was accustomed to proceed to the attainment

of her objects. She could not believe, that there existed a class of people, who would prefer advancing towards their object by a spiral line instead of a straight one, when both would conduct equally to the end they had in view. She was deeply shocked at Mrs. George Ainslie's unguarded manner to Mr. Mannering, and, indeed, to young men in general; but she judged her sister-in-law charitably, when she attributed it to the habits of the country in which she had been born and educated. She could allow for her not falling readily into the reserve and coldness, which are called the prevailing characteristics of English manners; she only wished, occasionally, that George himself would sometimes hint, that it would be prudent in his wife to accommodate herself, as much as possible, to the prejudices of those with whom she was now associating. To appreciate the degree of Jane's charitable

judgment properly, it must be imagined how revolting to the feelings of a very refined person, the constant allusions of a female, nearly connected, to topics which *more* than “touch the brink of all we hate,” could not fail of being. Jane’s cheeks frequently blushed crimson, when she was within hearing of the latitude of speech in which Selina indulged with those of the other sex. Her enormous deviations from the established standard of manners were annoying; but *these* were flagrant violations of acknowledged morals. It was disagreeable enough to hear the mixture of Hindostanee phrases, with which her conversation, if it may be called by that name, was interlarded; to listen to her expressions of joy, at what she called a *tomashee*;* her delight in a *suwarree*† round their carriage, and her fears sometimes at the *báburee*‡ made by

* Rejoicing. † A train of horse-attendants. ‡ Noise.

the mob. As people of bad taste choose to render their English barbarous, by the constant mixture of French and Italian phrases, it appeared as if Selina desired to walk in their steps ; but being ignorant of the languages which furnish their vocabulary, she took refuge in that which was within the scope of her knowledge, and which had, at least, one advantage, that of being less generally intelligible. The perfect nonchalance with which George witnessed his wife's proceedings ; his patience beneath her gross violations of the elegances and etiquettes of society, were bad symptoms of his own appreciation of the refinements of life. Few men of the highest intellect are elevated beyond the possibility of suffering annoyance from minor offences of this nature, when committed by one very nearly connected with them ; and his sisters suspected that George had, in fact, lost that tact

which would have rendered them perceptible to him ; that he had sunk to his wife's level, and was quite contented with the position they both occupied. It is astonishing how small is the number of young men who, having made a similar marriage, escape from a similar degradation of *taste*, to call it by no harsher name.

To Mrs. Ainslie's family, reflecting as they were by education and habit, religion could not but be an important subject of contemplation. They had long felt that *if* man be an eternal being, his destination hereafter is incalculably more important than his condition here, as the infinity of eternity exceeds the most extended duration to which time can be prolonged. It cannot be supposed that such a parent as Mrs. Ainslie, imbued with a high sense of the excellence, the beauty of the Christian system, neglected to inculcate its doctrines and precepts on her children, from

their earliest childhood. But as their minds matured, she did not attempt to bind the reason God had given them in the trammels of prejudice: she laid before them such authors as might show them “a reason of the faith that was in them,” and addressed them almost in the words of Joshua, “Choose you whom you will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!” Under a thorough conviction, therefore, of the truth and efficacy of Christianity, its influence pervaded every event that marked the lives of Charlotte and Jane. Religion, with them, was not a thing of hours and seasons; to be taken up, like a garment, at this time, and to be thrown off the next: it was mingled with *all* their serious designs and occupations; it bore in their minds that preponderance which its infinite worth demands. However little inclined people so disposed may be to adopt

that phraseology which Hannah More calls “religious *patavinity*,” it is quite obvious that, on certain occasions, the more frivolous part of the world will class their expressions under the terms Methodistical, Calvinistic, fanatic, or something equally opprobrious. It is a painful fact, that the newly-arrived Oriental knew little, almost nothing, of the tenets even of that religion of which she called herself a disciple; far less did they bear on her practice. She had not an idea of regulating her actions by a higher standard than her own capricious inclinations. Even the formal observance of the sabbath was irksome to her, after it had ceased to be a novelty. It is lamentable, that in many parts of India there is no authorized place of worship where Christians may “assemble themselves together;” and it is still more to be deplored, that even where these exist, the majority of Europeans

are not to be discovered there. The parish church of Mrs. Ainslie's family was also that of many people of distinction; and Selina was at first delighted with the fashion exhibited there, and with the opportunity of displaying her own finery. But this could not last, because she saw always the same persons, and she was soon wearied of endeavouring to attract *their* notice, Sunday after Sunday. So she began to complain of the fatigue of sitting so many hours, and to contrive excuses of absence. When Mrs. Ainslie first detected these symptoms of her daughter-in-law's deplorable state of mind, she began occasionally to insinuate the great, the paramount importance, of the duties thus neglected,—or, worse still, reluctantly performed. Selina was acute enough to comprehend all that was meant, and she flew to communicate her grievances to her husband, quite sure of his sympathising in her unqua-

lified disgust at any thing approaching to Methodism. And she was right in calculating on his participating in her sentiments. He had lived amongst the careless or the openly profane in India, until he had entirely fallen off from "the first love of his youth." He had ceased to remember the time when, with those he loved, "he had taken sweet counsel together, and gone to the house of God as friends." He would have been exceedingly angry if any person had ventured to charge him with being an unbeliever ; nevertheless, to all practical intents and purposes he was so. He acknowledged to •Selina, that his mother and sisters were indeed hardly better than "*new lights*;" he could not imagine how this had come to pass; things were certainly not so bad before he had sailed first for India: it was very annoying to be bored with constant sermons, which were of no earthly use but to make a man discontented

with himself, and afraid to use the goods within his reach. Then Selina, having gained so much assent, ventured to hint about the comforts and advantages of a separate abode. She was such a very secondary person at the Holme. And he himself must find things very different from any thing to which he had been accustomed. He must have perceived how annoyed Charlotte especially was, if he attempted to smoke a cheeroot even near the house, far less within it; whereas, if they lived by themselves, he would be as much at liberty as in India. Then there were so many Indians of their acquaintance in England just now, whom they would, of course, wish to receive, but whom they were debarred from inviting, in consequence of being themselves only *guests*. But why pursue the sinuosities of the cunning of a small mind through all their deviations? It is sufficient to add, that Selina gained her object, and had the

triumph of carrying it despite the prudent remonstrances of her mother-in-law. A ready-furnished house, close to Winchester, received them.

But Selina had not been a week in her new abode before she began to be sensible of the inconveniencies resulting from her inexperience in the details of English domestic economy. Instead of a butler, cook, matees, palanqueen boys, and the long et-cetera of an Indian establishment, she was compelled to restrict the number of her domestics to three,—two women-servants and a boy. She was soon tired of the endless appeals of the cook,—and not always able to comprehend what directions were required. Consequently, that very efficient personage being soon fully aware that Mrs. George Ainslie knew “no more of housekeeping than a three months’ old child,” began to attend, with undeviating scrupulosity, to the advance-

ment of her own particular interests. Peculation flourished in all its various branches; so that even Selina, with all her ignorance of the value of pounds, shillings, and pence, began to be astounded at the amount of their expenditure, which appeared the greater from being contrasted with their receipts. She complained to her husband of the impositions that *must* be practised somewhere; but he was much too indolent to trouble himself about the matter, convinced that the control of the ménage rested properly with his wife. He did not take into consideration the trifling circumstance of her utter incapacity, the natural and inevitable result of her former life. He acted as if he thought knowledge of *this* meaner kind must be a kind of intuition with women. In short, so that his dinner was tolerably well dressed,—his cheroot at hand,—his brandy-pawnee forthcoming,—and the sofa vacant until he chose to

occupy it,—he was quite satisfied that every thing else in this world was proceeding with all the regularity necessary to the welfare of the beings who swarm on its surface.

Mrs. George Ainslie thought she would be wise in following her husband's system of content and self-indulgence. She found no benefit result from harassing herself, so she quietly threw the reins of the household-government into the hands of the cook, and betook herself to the cultivation of the roses of existence. Of course, the acquaintances she had made at the Holme, called on her in her own house, because that was a mark of respect due to the family with which she was connected. Not that she or George was very popular amongst that class of persons, who were rather, if the truth be told, apt to despise their weakness of character, and to speak harshly of their peculiarities of manner. The *young* men were generally less fas-

tidious: George welcomed them freely, and his wife was pretty enough to pass an idle morning with, and not at all the more objectionable in this point of view, for being less *fastidious* than the general run of English girls. There was no necessity for omitting the *point* of a capital story from the fear of its being offensive to her delicacy; nor were they obliged to appear obtuse to a *double entendre*, inasmuch as her laugh was always ready on such occasions. So that this kind of conduct is not exhibited by a wife, a sister, or a mistress, very young men are not averse to its being displayed by indifferent females, because they like to feel *free and easy*, as they call it, and are happy to sport their *bon-mots* unchecked by the apprehension of frowns, or, perhaps, *reproofs*. At this election time, too, it was found particularly convenient to be acquainted at a house so near to Winchester as George Ainslie's, and it was

impossible for Selina to complain of the solitude of her mornings. Moreover, Mr. Mannering was by no means an infrequent visitor.

In point of intellect, Mr. Mannering deserved the high appreciation with which Charlotte Ainslie regarded him. Gifted by nature with talents far above the usual standard, they had been assiduously cultivated by education, and his views enlarged by *judicious* travelling. The idea of marrying a woman whose refinement was not equal to *his* ideas of feminine perfection, was never for an instant admitted by his imagination. He had made no resolutions against matrimony ; on the contrary, being the possessor of a fine estate, and the representative of an ancient family, he had indulged sundry contemplations of such an event at no very distant period. His admiration of the grace and elegance of Charlotte Ainslie's mind and person was unbounded ; and he had listened

to sundry whispers of his heart, that *she* might be the being with whom he would pass his future life, fulfilling the duties of his station, and indulging those intellectual tastes which were to him one of the principal charms of existence. Meanwhile, there could be no objection to a slight interlude, just to relieve the monotony of the serious drama he was meditating:—Mr. Mannering had,—as what human being has not?—*faults*, the greater, perhaps, because they were not extenuated by any weakness of understanding. There were moments when even *he* despised his own frailty.

He *had* his faults,—many and grievous. He had been too successful with the sex in his youth to appreciate them fairly in general. Charlotte, and such as Charlotte, were, in his estimation, only splendid exceptions, and on that account the more highly valued. He had an enthusiastic admiration of beauty, and could

endure the most frivolous woman temporarily, so that her face offered aught to delight his eye. His constancy, also, was that of the understanding, not of the feelings. His reason never for a moment wandered from the allegiance to which, by a sort of tacit compact, he had devoted himself; but he did not feel it, therefore, incumbent on him to check those *égaremens du cerveau* which afforded him so much amusement. Not that he was ignorant of his foible; it had been the subject of many remonstrances from the best friend he considered himself to possess in this world,—his quondam guardian. But he did not condemn himself harshly on account of it. Hitherto it had never led him to the commission of any thing approaching to criminality, and its worst effects had been felt, when he was occasionally obliged to endure a scene with the lady whose waning influence had

first been brought before her own notice by a suspicion of the ascendancy of a rival.

Mr. Mannering was a man of enlarged views, regarding his species generally, and his benevolence assumed a grand and imposing character; this originated in a combination of motives,—his philosophic tenets,—the expansion of his intellect, and an ardent desire for the mental improvement of mankind. Not one of these theories offended his own selfishness, or touched that sensitive pride from which he was not free. But the Christian benevolence which inculcates on its disciple the imperative duty of sparing another, even by the sacrifice of his own dearest wishes or most intimate prejudices, had nothing to attract the love, or excite the emulation, of Mr. Mannering. It would be to depreciate his understanding to assert, that he considered religion a thing of minor import-

ance; but he had so bewildered himself in endeavouring to arrive at the reasons which influence an Almighty agent to permit so many contending systems to obtain in the world, since *one* only can be true, that he had almost settled himself into indifference to every peculiar faith, content to acknowledge the being of "One great first cause least understood." However sublime and philosophic such a theory may be, it is generally found to be too vague to bear upon man's daily actions. Mr. Mannering could luxuriate in eloquent descriptions of the beauty and dignity of virtue, and he did not err greatly when he felt conscious of a capacity in himself for *great* action. But daily self-denial,—a constant war with his passions or inclinations,—such were not the efforts to which his conceptions of religion prompted. Charlotte Ainslie, with all her talent, had seen too little of the world, and, with all her pene-

tration, had too superficial an insight into human nature, to be able to distinguish between the material differences really existing in things so apparently similar. Entranced by the sublimity of Mr. Mannering's sentiments, she had never dreamed that they originated in a source from which, according to *her* faith, flowed only poisoned waters. He himself was not unconscious of the delusion under which Charlotte laboured with regard to him; but it would have appeared to him indeed a work of supererogation to rectify her mistake. He was well content that her appreciation of him favoured his views, and he was careful never to utter a sentiment that could raise the veil. He compromised between his convenience and his perceptions of the beauty and dignity of truth, by never asserting what he believed to be false; he merely abstained from uttering the *whole* truth! Nevertheless, this caution was not

always easy. Charlotte delighted in searching into those topics where he could not be silent, and where he was in constant dread of saying less than would answer her expectations. After a conversation of this kind, he had occasionally found relief in the frivolity of Mrs. George Ainslie. In her society there was nothing to dread,—neither detection of what he wished concealed, nor disapprobation of any thing he chose to assert. Then her beauty was so far above mediocrity,—and even her *silliness*, partaking, as it did, of a character so widely different from that exhibited by females born and educated in the western hemisphere, was amusing rather than otherwise. Its novelty was not unacceptable to a man versed in all the ordinary modes in which feminine foibles are generally exhibited. Then her evident preference of *his* attentions to those of the many who were always ready to offer them, was not altogether

a despicable offering *even* to the vanity of Mr. Mannering. And George, with all his listless indolence, was able, and sometimes willing, to afford certain information regarding the people amongst whom he had been living, not unacceptable to a person of Mr. Mannering's speculative and inquiring habits. Above all, George was the brother of Charlotte, whose image, notwithstanding his *flirtation*, was enshrined in his innermost heart as that of his future wife. It cannot be supposed that Selina, deficient as she was in delicate perceptions, and indeed ignorant of their requirements, abstained from sundry jocose allusions to Mr. Mannering's *former and fleeting* preference of her sister-in-law, allusions which, if they were tiresome at the moment, he always allowed to pass away unnoticed. If, at this time, any rational man had been an observer of the *liaison* between Mr. Mannering and Mrs. George Ainslie, and had been on

such terms of intimate friendship with the former, as to inquire what he proposed should be the termination of an acquaintance pursued on so extraordinary a footing, Mr. Mannering, whatever might have been his inclinations to enlighten the mind of his friend, would have been unable to do so. He had not even shaped to himself the object he had in view, nor the manner in which he meant to decline from his present assiduities. Beyond the amusement of the passing hour, he had not extended his views. The idea that he could contemplate any serious entanglement with the wife of Charlotte's brother, he would have scorned as too preposterous to be admitted by any understanding, even one degree more luminous than that of an idiot.

The suspicions of George Ainslie were never for a moment excited. He had been so accustomed to the *freedom* of Selina's manners in

India, that her present mode of conduct did not cause a single emotion of uneasiness. He thought her so young and so pretty, that attention from *his* sex was a thing of course. His mind, completely inured to the system prevalent amongst females of his wife's class, had lost his perceptions of the minor delicacies which distinguish the conduct of the highly educated and virtuous British female. Moreover he knew enough of the signs of attachment to feel convinced that, if Mr. Mannering did not hereafter stand on terms of intimate connexion with his family, it would be attributable to Charlotte's coldness, not to *his* insensibility. And George, unworldly as he was, was sufficiently alive to the advantages of such an alliance, to indulge in sundry wishes that Charlotte might secure them. Therefore he received Mr. Mannering with great cordiality at all times, acting on the impression, that the better

he liked Charlotte's family, the more anxious he would be for the connexion. If Mr. Man-
nering had *really* contemplated guilt in his
intercourse with Selina, such conduct on the
part of her husband would have had a greater
tendency to defeat his intentions, than the most
studied coldness and avoidance. Confident in
the steadfastness of his own purposes, he never
entertained the remotest *suspicion of himself*.
He was quite certain that it was in his power
to retreat at any given moment. He disdained
to fly from a temptation, the existence of which
he denied with derision, and feared not that he
was doomed to add another to the practical
illustrations of that warning,—“ Let him that
thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”

As to Charlotte, if her preference for Mr.
Mannering did not amount to absolute love, it
only fell so far short of it as resulted from the
self-command which formed an extraordinary

feature in her character. Her esteem,—her admiration,—were his in no common degree; and at times, when the symptoms of his attachment were most apparent, her tenderness was indulged. Charlotte, accustomed to observe herself narrowly,—to look daily into her own heart,—was so well aware of the strength of her feelings on certain points, as to be certain that an unhappy passion would completely prostrate her, and to shudder at the possibility of entertaining a sentiment of this nature without the strongest moral conviction that it was returned. Perhaps, much as her caution in this respect must have been lulled by the manner of Mr. Mannering towards her, even *her* self-command might have availed little, if her habits of observation had been less constantly exercised. She was not entirely without pain in the society of her lover and her sister-in-law. There was that in the frequency and mode

of their intercourse which was not the less annoying, because, from the indefinite position in which she and Mr. Mannering stood towards each other, she had not the right of remonstrance. She was compelled to silence, and apparent unconsciousness; a state, where the affections are in any degree concerned, more difficult of endurance than every other. Moreover, she was obliged constantly to hear those flippancy remarks on the frequency of their intercourse, which are current amongst the silly and inquisitive majority of mankind all over the world. Indeed, slander with the hundred tongues, had not hesitated to whisper suspicion to Mrs. Ainslie; and *her* fears for the happiness and honour of her son were not of course concealed from two daughters, with whom she lived on terms of the most confidential intercourse and friendship; the legitimate tribute now paid to that maternal

affection, which had never overstepped the boundaries of rational parental authority ; never outraged human reason by one purely arbitrary mandate. All these circumstances combined to create a coldness towards Mr. Mannering in the whole family at the Holme, which somewhat irritated his feelings, and was the more disagreeable, because it seemed to attack that independence of feeling and action, on which he most insisted, as the natural prerogative of his sex. Consequently, his visits ceasing to be productive of unmingled pleasure, were more rare ; and his manner to Charlotte in particular assumed a coldness, by no means the less poignant from being a mask worn to hide the latent feelings of his heart. At the house of George he was always assured of a very warm welcome ; and from Mrs. George Ainslie, of those flattering tributes to his vanity, to which no man, per-

haps, is entirely insensible. The progress of the election kept him very constantly in Winchester and its neighbourhood; and his hours of leisure began, as a matter of course, to be spent, *always* in the society of Selina. George was occasionally absent at such times; and what could be more natural than that she, who had no friends or connexions in England to whom she could confide the petty griefs which make up the sum of the misery of human life, should pour the detail into the first willing ear she found? She suffered daily from some want or other, the supplying of which was quite beyond George's means; and she experienced a thousand difficulties in the management of their limited income, from which she had not tact or experience enough to extricate herself, and which she dared not confide to a husband, whose chief desire was to be entirely exempt from all pecuniary cares.

Now Mr. Mannering's friendship for the pair exhibited itself often in the shape of useful, sometimes splendid presents. Every new English jewel Selina wore, was his gift; many elegant dresses were often also bestowed by the same munificent hand. George was not ignorant of the *whole* of this lavish generosity, and he was not startled by it, because it was not much beyond the limits of his Indian experience. He had seen such things often in the course of his life in the East; and he was not aware, that they were hardly consistent, in England, with the relative situation of the parties. By degrees, Mrs. George Ainslie found herself sufficiently confident in Mr. Mannering's friendship, to appeal to him for pecuniary loans when her disbursements had much exceeded her receipts, and in cases which she had not courage to bring under her husband's cognizance. The familiarity and

confidential tone of their intercourse; want of the restraints of education on the one part, and ignorance of the practice of self-denial on the other; in short, a thousand circumstances, which need not be detailed, and may possibly be described in the single word, OPPORTUNITY, produced a result which, much as it was to be deprecated, was at least neither very surprising, nor very contrary to the ordinary issue of such an intercourse.

To live in guilt—to deceive the trusting—to carry about a face of innocence, and to intrude, on the credit of it, into the society of the virtuous, were tasks not difficult to Selina, because *her* moral sense had never been acute. She violated hardly any principles recognised by herself as grounds of action; she disobeyed no moral precepts, for on *her* youthful mind they had never been inculcated;—she infringed not the laws of a religion, of whose

doctrines she was nearly ignorant. No mother's voice had led her's in prayer to the Most High! No father's example had animated her to emulation; her infancy had been passed amongst idolaters; her childhood amongst the careless; her youth amongst profane scoffers. She had married; and had heard from her husband no word of instruction or reproof. She had travelled to a happier land; but time and impunity had shut her heart against all remonstrance. She had *fallen*; and with whomsoever might rest the condemnation due to her early nurture, the unmitigated penalty of her crime *must* fall on her own head.

But not on her's alone—not on his only, who had sinned with her, and in the moment of offence had loathed himself that he “had left celestial beds to prey on garbage” — a whole family were plunged into sorrow nearly

allied to shame, in the discovered dishonour thus brought on a son of their house. The mother and her daughters shared the agonies of the son and brother. And Charlotte ! was she insensible to the *redoubling* of this stroke on her head ? Not insensible, but patient, and doubly grateful for those habits of self-command, which had preserved her from the anguish of cherished love betrayed. Let us not attempt to draw the veil which shrouded her first emotions of poignant pain from every mortal eye. A few days passed over, and the cloud vanished from her brow. She wore a serene look of composure, which augured well of the health of the mind within. She was able to participate in the grief of those she loved, without reference to her own personal cause of sorrow ; and in after years, when, as the wife of one who possessed all the higher qualities of Mr. Mannering, without his weaknesses, — the mother of girls, fair as herself,

she trained them early to habits of self-command and self-examination,—her lessons were rendered the more impressive by the earnest thankfulness with which she recalled her escape from the “fiery trial” that had visited indeed, but had found her prepared, and left her unscathed.

George never entertained a thought of divorce. “I might have expected what has occurred,” said he. “I knew well the habits of girls of Selina’s class, and I married her *forewarned*—the dupe of a caprice of fancy. I leave you, my dear mother, a wretched but a wiser man. Want shall not tempt *her* to future guilt. She is, indeed, deserted by her betrayer, the natural issue of all such connexions; but if she fall lower still, the fault shall not rest with me. She shall have, at least, the means of living in repentance; and clouded as my future career in life must be, I have too much regard to the probable peace

of its close, to wish my conscience to be burdened with a greater guilt than that which at present oppresses it; a consciousness of my fatal over-indulgence; my selfish negligence in the *second* instance; and in the *first*, the mad infatuation which induced me to entrust my honour and happiness to the keeping of a frivolous, uneducated, half-caste East Indian."

"God preserve him through his future career!" such was the prayer of Mrs. Ainslie; "through whatever trials, whatever punishments, whatever bereavements, may he live to be a better, a wiser, a happier man, than we have seen him on his first RETURN to his native land!"

THE END.



